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The Week

WAR and politics in China continue to provide the most fascinating and momentous spectacle which is being staged in the world of human affairs. The important fact is that the Cantonese armies, which are the standard-bearers of the Chinese national renascence, continue to win surprising and decisive victories over their opponents. Their latest vctory over the military chieftain who had ruled the region to the south and west of Shanghai is of the utmost importance for the national cause. If it is confirmed, and the Canton government is able to establish its authority in the territory which its armies are now occupying, it will control the rich trade of the Yellow River and its valley, which will mean a huge increase in its resources in men and money. In the area which it now governs, it has established a financial and administrative system which, for the first time in modern China, is capable of collecting taxes, organizing public services and carrying out a policy. Presumably, it will be able in a few months to extend this system to the Yangtse valley, in which case the strength of its economic and military position would probably become irresistible. If it is capable of taking full advantage of its victories, it should in a few months wield enough power to carry the war into the domains of Wu-Pei Fu and Chang Tso-lin. The danger is that the Nationalists will advance, not too slowly, but so rapidly that their conquests may not be enduring.

IT looks more and more as if the national impulse to which the Canton government is giving an effective military and political expression will, in the course of the present year, subdue the whole of China. The Nationalist victories, according to all accounts, are won quite as much by propaganda as by the discipline and the valor of the Cantonese armies. The troops which oppose them are merely mercenaries, or at best provincial levies; and their loyalty and the loyalty of the communities which they are supposed to defend are easily undermined by armies which are fighting on behalf of the Chinese national idea. For the first time in centuries, the Canton government is offering to the Chinese peoples the prospect of participating in the life of an orderly, independent state which will at least try to govern in their interests. Propaganda to this effect ought to work as well in the north of China as it has in the south. Chang Tso-lin stands, it is true, for an idea. He, like many another apprehensive official, is proclaiming himself to the world as the arch-enemy of Bolshevism, but this kind of preachment is intended, not for the benefit of the Chinese, but to curry favor and support from foreign powers. The anti-Nationalists can for the time being place armies in the field against the Cantonese armies, but they cannot place ideas in the field against the Cantonese ideas. These ideas will continue to march ahead of the Cantonese troops and pave the way for their victories. The most serious obstacles which the Chinese Nationalists will encounter in winning over their fellow-countrymen will not be created by their present active opponents, who appear already to be beaten. They will arise after the fighting is over, and when they will have to redeem their pledge to provide the Chinese with an orderly and progressive national government.

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THE events of the next few weeks in and around Shanghai will do much to determine for some years to come the relation between China and the western powers. The victories of the Cantonese armies are making the native population in the Shanghai concession extremely restless. The workers in the Shanghai offices and factories are unusually well organized, and they are, consequently, peculiarly accessible to the influence of the Nationalist propaganda. They have already revealed their state of mind and their ability to act together by the recent strike, which was political, and during the coming negotiations about the future status of the concession, they may prove to be an active and unruly force. It was the expectation of the difficulty of maintaining order in Shanghai, in the event of the occupation of the neighborhood of that city by the Nationalist troops, which probably had much to do with the dispatch of such a large British army to the Far East. Happily, however, there is no reason as yet to anticipate that the western powers, and particularly Great Britain, cannot negotiate a temporary agreement about Shanghai with the Nationalists. The two parties have already reached such an agreement with respect to Hankow, and the same principles should apply to the two cases, different as in some respects they are.

APPARENTLY, Mr. Nicholas Murray Butler's recent attempt to rule out Mr. Coolidge as a candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination, solely because he would be asking for a third term, has fallen flat. This is as it should be. There are plenty of sound reasons for opposing Mr. Coolidge's renomination and reëlection, but an appeal to the tradition against a third term is not one of them. Mr. Coolidge has been elected only once to the Presidency, and the comparatively short time he served as the late Mr. Harding's successor should not count against his ambition to succeed himself. The case of Theodore Roosevelt, who refused in somewhat similar circumstances to run again, is not really analogous. Mr. Roosevelt had in the first place almost two full terms, but what is more to the point, he was an aggressive leader, whose personality during his term of office dominated Congress and American public opinion. He could not have used his power as President to contribute to his own reëlection, without threatening to become an undesirably overshadowing figure in American political life. But Mr. Coolidge has none of Mr. Roosevelt's buoyant and belligerent self-assertion. On the contrary, he is essentially neutral. He cannot be renominated and reëlected unless the American people continue to be ruled by their habits, their traditions and their fear of innovations and experiments—that, is, by inertia. At the moment, the prospect of preventing Mr. Coolidge's renomination and reëlection seem to be better than they were a year ago, and we are glad of it, but the opposition in this instance to an alleged third term does not and should not count very much. Mr. Coolidge is such a devotee of literal tradition that he would probably appeal to anti-third-term prejudice against any other candidate who was in the same situation as himself, but, in our opinion, it is not fair or pertinent to use it against him. It is not people who worship traditions who will finally slay Coolidge and Coolidgism. It is people who wish to modify and improve traditions.

THE dispatch of additional thousands of Marines to Nicaragua, and the landing of about 800 bluejackets to aid the Marines, looks like actual war against Sacasa. If it is not war, it certainly is intervention, and can fail to become war only if Sacasa allows our forces to deprive him of his objectives without a struggle. The technique is amazingly simple. The American forces, whenever Diaz has been defeated or is threatened by further defeat, occupy and "neutralize" large areas, forbidding any fighting or troop movements within them. These areas appear to be strategically chosen to bar the advance of the victorious liberals. Indeed, it has been rumored that they will soon include almost the whole of Nicaragua. A similar situation would have been created if, during our Civil War, British forces had been landed at New Orleans to "protect British interests," had then proceeded to "neutralize" most of the fighting areas whenever the Southern troops were hard pressed, and Britain's Foreign Minister had claimed that he was merely doing a little necessary policing. But, of course, such things are not done to other strong powers, no matter how large the interest and how great the provocation, because then intervention frankly becomes war, with all its costs and penalties. They are done only when the enemy is weak and his forces few, as in this case, so that the President, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy have enough men and guns at their disposal to carry on a private war without any authority from Congress or support from the public.

ACCORDING to the income studies of the National Bureau of Economic Research, the total current income in the United States reached in 1926 the amazing figure of $89,682,000,000, the largest in history, and 40 percent larger than the estimated income of $62,736,000,000 in 1921. This increase was, moreover, a real increase; it arose from a larger production of goods and services rather than from higher prices, for prices are now down to about the 1921 level, on most articles. It must not be forgotten that large estimates of this sort involve many uncertainties, both of fact and of definition. There are considerable areas of economic life concerning which information is so scanty that incomes of persons and business firms operating in them can be estimated only crudely. Furthermore, "current income" as defined by the staff of the National Bureau has a quite technical meaning. It does not

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include, for instance, additions to or substractions from corporate surpluses. Though these figures can be used only with the exercise of the greatest care as to their make-up, they are undoubtedly the best estimates we have, and they indicate, no matter what qualifications we may make in them, a tremendous gain in technical means of productivity. It is to be noted, however, that the announcement tells nothing about the distribution of income—which economic classes profited chiefly by the advances. When the Bureau states that the "average man" has gained, it is speaking of a purely mathematical average, not necessarily of specific groups such as wage-earners or farmers.

A FEW weeks ago the New Republic published an article by Lewis Corey, entitled Is Income More Equally Distributed? in which the author concluded that those persons with the higher incomes had recently been receiving a larger share of the national income. From the internal revenue statistics, we can tell approximately what the total of net incomes in various classes is, so long as they are above the minimum below which a return is not required. Taking the total of net incomes of $5,000 or over, for instance, Mr. Corey compared it with estimates of the total national income, and derived percentages which seemed to show that a larger part of the national income had, since 1921, been going to these classes. Unfortunately for this conclusion, the figures which Mr. Corey used for the total national income since 1921 now appear to have been too small. According to the National Bureau's estimates, the total current income was $65,567,000,000 in 1922, $76,769,000,000 in 1923, and $79,365,000,000 in 1924, as against the corresponding figures of $56,500,000,000 in 1922, $57,700,000,000 in 1923, and $56,250,000,000 in 1924, used by Mr. Corey. This changes the percentages, and makes the share of the total income received by those having $5,000 a year and up 12.1 percent in 1924 instead of 17.7 percent, as he had it. This was a smaller share than in any year since 1915, except 1920 and 1921. Similar corrections should be made in his other figures, and they would substantially alter his conclusion.

The Farmers' Insurrection

MR. COOLIDGE will, we assume, veto the McNary-Haugen bill, and his refusal to sign it will, for as long as he remains President, prohibit legislation of this kind. Nevertheless, its passage by Congress is, in the circumstances, a new fact of major importance in the economic and political situation of the United States. It probably foreshadows a conflict which, in one form or another, will for many years dominate American politics. Those states which are chiefly agricultural will be arrayed against those states which are chiefly industrial and urban, and the resulting friction and antagonism will, before it is burned out, transform many of the institutions, groupings and loyalties of America of today.

This prediction is based upon one assumption which may or may not be true. It assumes that the advantage in the prices of its products which industry, as compared to agriculture, has enjoyed, since 1921, indicates the existence of a more or less permanent ability on its part to appropriate a disproportionately large share of the national income. Its prosperity is the result of a better organization and a stronger strategic position, which its beneficiaries will not voluntarily abandon. Agricultural producers can strengthen their bargaining power only by improving their own organization, but the building up of this improved organization implies a coöperative spirit and technique which they lack, and at best it would take many years. The citizens of the United States are accustomed to quick results. The farmers in those states which produce agricultural staples in part for foreign markets are suffering from a prolonged and an apparently inexorable deflation of their economic expectations, their standard of living and their social status. They imputed much of the well-being which they formerly enjoyed to the opportunities which their country had conferred upon them. They not unnaturally impute their present and prospective privations also to economic conditions which are in part the result of a collective responsibility. They do not propose to struggle back to economic prosperity, if at all, slowly and at great personal cost. That is not the customary American way. They demand immediate assistance from the state in protecting the price of agricultural staples. Until this proposed remedy has been tried, they will be satisfied with nothing less.

They are apparently in a position either to get what they want or else to revenge themselves by creating havoc in Republican party politics. They have demanded this kind of legislation from Congress ever since 1922. They have failed to get it, but hitherto when they failed they did not allow the failure to affect their party regularity. Now, apparently, they have cut loose and are ready to upset the apple-cart. Those Republicans who voted for the bill (a majority of the Republicans in both houses) acted deliberately so as to plunge a Republican President in a deep and sticky hole. Mr. Coolidge cannot sign it, but, if he vetoes it, he intensifies the schism in the Republican party and compromises his chances of renomination. Even though he could still nominate himself, he would by persisting in his candidacy invite either a bolt or a Democratic victory. Neither would his withdrawal heal the breach. The Republican nomination would still depend upon a fight between two factions, representing respectively industry and agriculture. Mr. Coolidge's veto has proved to the farmers that the only way to assure the passage of the McNary-Haugen bill is to

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elect a President who is pledged to sign it. They will presumably work with as much tenacity to elect such a President as they have already worked to build up a majority in Congress. If they concentrate on this object, they will either rule or ruin the Republican party of the past.

The majority in both houses of Congress which voted for the McNary-Haugen bill is bi-partisan. It contains, relative to their numbers, almost as large a percentage of Democrats as it does of Republicans. Nevertheless, the passage of the bill, followed by its veto, will cause a much more serious conflict in the Republican than in the Democratic party. For the Republicans are in power. A Republican President is responsible for the failure of the bill, and he will for the next two years bar the success of any analogous measure. Finally, the Republican party was formed by an alliance between agricultural and industrial interests and depends upon a continuation of the alliance for its voting preponderance. If the two interests have for the time being reached a parting of the ways, the Republicans of the industrial East and Middle West must, if they propose still to control the country, seek new political allies. It was not always so. Previous to the formation of the Republican party, the Democratic party had been for over a generation the political agent of the agrarian interest and at the same time the ruler of the nation. But when the South seceded, the pioneer democrats of the West rallied to the Union and combined with the Unionists of the northern industrial states to make a party which represented both a national idea and a national economic policy. Such the Republican party continued to be as long as it could balance the privileged treatment which the manufacturers received by means of a protective tariff with gifts out of the public domain to the farmer. But these gifts have long since ceased from exhaustion, and recently the Republicans have weighted their policy heavily in favor of industry. Unless they are ready either to diminish the favors which they extend to industry or to extend the corresponding favors to agriculture, they will cease to be a party with a balanced national economic policy. They will represent the cities as opposed to the country and industry as opposed to agriculture.

As to the effect of the opposition on the Republican party and on the future economic policy of the nation, one can only guess, but there are facts which rule out some possible guesses as unrealistic. For the present, the opposition between agriculture and industry will not be healed by either a voluntary or a forced lowering of the industrial price level. The industrial interest can for the present defeat any attack on its control of prices, because such an attack, in so far as it were successful, would involve a prolonged period of economic depression. It is improbable, also, that the opposition between the two interests will be neutralized at any time in the near future by a thorough-going reorganization of agriculture which will improve the economic status of the farmer and renew the vitality of rural social life. Such a reorganization is the only statesmanlike answer to agricultural depression and, as we point out elsewhere, the government can help to bring it about without making of the farmer the beneficiary of a state subsidy. But it cannot be brought about without the exhibition of patience in adversity and the coöperative spirit which is alien to the American popular psychology. Americans are accustomed to speculative profits. The farmer seeks instinctively for a quick remedy which will restore the value of farm property and discount the necessity of a thorough-going reorganization. The McNary-Haugen bill will either fail or succeed in a comparatively short time. Its methods are congenial to those of the protective system, and it is not impossible that its advocates may not force the Republican party to adopt it as a necessity of party cohesion. The attempt artificially to level up the price of agricultural staples is the easiest, if not the best way out for everybody. It is possible, consequently, that the Republicans of the North and the East will, if they are pushed to the wall, restore harmony in the Republican party by consenting to the nomination of Lowden. They have most to lose by permitting a rupture. But they will not compromise in this way unless they are certain that, in the event of refusal, they will have to overcome an insurrection from the aggrieved agrarians and the running of a third candidate.

Should, however, the Republican party split over a division of interest between industry and agriculture, the Democratic party would not, curiously enough, be well situated to take advantage of the schism. For the Democratic party also is divided by a conflict which involves different issues. In the Republican party, the representatives of the industrial interest are stand-patters who are opposed to federal contralization and who, for the most part, would like to keep prohibition out of national politics. The agrarians, on the other hand, are usually radicals, who are not disturbed by the fear of centralization, and who are aggressively dry. In the Democratic party, there is one faction which is strong in the South and the West and which is dry and favorable to the McNary-Haugen bill. But unlike the Republican supporters of that bill, these Democratic agrarians are unusually stand-pat and are opposed in theory to increased federal responsibilities. If the Republican party were to split, the representatives of the industrial and financial interest would naturally seek an alliance in the South, whose politicans have of late been most favorable to business interests. Just for the present, however, the low price of cotton and the inclusion of the cotton producer among the beneficiaries of the valorization plan form an insuperable barrier to such an alliance. At the same time an alliance between the representatives of big business and the other faction in the Democratic party—that which is headed by

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Governor Smith—is still more impossible. For Al Smith represents a wet, wage-earning urban constituency which, while by no means radical, is sceptical and progressive. It is hard to see how the Smith faction could unite either with the dry Republican radicals or the neutral Republican conservatives.

During the next two years, the politics of the United States is apparently destined to become even more confused than it is today. The two national parties cannot deal responsibly with controversial issues. If any one faction in either party proposes an aggressive policy as a matter of interest or conviction, it inevitably divides the party against itself. The aggressive faction is compelled to seek elsewhere the allies which it needs for success. Both the Democrats and the Republicans preserve their indivisibility only by preserving their neutrality and their conservatism. Yet there is no general impulse towards affirmative radicalism. If they should yield to the drift towards rupture, they would, for the time being, separate into several local or class groups rather than into two new parties which will be divided by living differences of policy and outlook. For this reason, the chances always are that on any particular occasion they will manage to avoid separation. As the campaign for the Presidential nomination grows warm, the pressure towards reunion, particularly in the Republican party, will increase. Conceivably it may come about as the result of the return of the insurrectionary farmers to the fold as it did in 1924, but this result is wholly improbable unless, as also in 1924, there is a temporary improvement in the prices of farm products. If reunion does triumph, it is, in our opinion, more likely that the business interests of the East and North will accept Lowden and price-fixing, rather than that the discontented farmers will accept Coolidge and the policy of doing nothing.

What Next for the Farmer?

EVEN the staunchest advocates of the McNary-Haugen bill must admit that it is by no means a complete agricultural policy. If the bill or something like it should eventually become a law, if it should be administered with sufficient wisdom and discretion, if the equalization fees should be fully collected without strenuous objection on the part of large groups of farmers, still the measure would fail unless supplemented by other reforms.

For one thing, it would fail unless it becomes possible to limit production of a given crop on a rising market. The measure proposes to maintain American prices by the purchase of any surplus tending to drive those prices below a given level. The surplus may be held for a future shortage, or marketed abroad at a lower price. But if the effect were to increase production, because of the guaranteed price—which would presumably offer a sure profit even to the farmers whose costs were highest—the loss in buying, holding and selling surpluses would become larger and larger, until it equaled any benefit obtained by the farmers from the higher price. Since this loss is to be assessed against the farmers by the equalization fee, they would have been chasing the devil around the stump.

A shrewd student of the cotton situation recently remarked that it would be a calamity if the McNary-Haugen bill should be signed by the President just before the planting season. The Department of Agriculture has just advised that cotton acreage should be reduced 30 percent. Without the bill, cotton growers will be lucky if half that reduction is achieved. But if it becomes known in the South that legislation has been passed to sustain cotton prices, the incentive for reduction will be removed. One trouble is now that individuals are not sufficiently bound by the compulsion which rests collectively upon them all, to limit production. A meeting may vote to reduce acreage by a certain percentage. Those not at the meeting, and some of those who supported the reduction, will proceed to increase acreage on the theory that if others reduce, the price will rise and they may profit thereby. The incentive is the same as that which prompts wage-earners to scab during a strike. Nevertheless, under present conditions enough farmers may strike, and enough may become bankrupt, so that production is really reduced. If, however, the price is guaranteed regardless of the amount of the product, the individual incentive to reduce acreage well-nigh disappears. If farmers cannot efficiently coöperate to limit output when each suffers a prompt and automatic penalty for not doing so, how can they be expected to limit output when the penalty is far off and indirect? An enormous strengthening of coöperative control is essential for the working of any McNary-Haugen scheme. With such control, the coöperatives would doubtless be strong enough to handle any unforeseen surplus themselves.

Reduction of acreage for a given crop is not, moreover, the only agricultural requirement. It is difficult to reduce, at least with any degree of permanence, unless the released land is used for some other purpose. Diversification of crops has been preached assiduously in all agricultural regions which practise the one-crop system and suffer from chronic surpluses. Diversification not merely reduces the acreage devoted to the principal crop of the region; it also spreads the farmer's risk so that a failure of a given crop from any cause is not so disastrous. But how to diversify successfully is a difficult problem. You meet first the obstacle that many farmers in a one-crop region are not skilled in other types of agriculture than that which they have been practising. People change their habits slowly, and farmers even more slowly than most people. Agriculture is so difficult an art that a man might spend his lifetime learning a really first-class technique of raising any one product. About the only way to master a new system of agriculture successfully in a

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short time is to copy someone else who already knows how. Demonstrations, then, are necessary, coupled with quantities of advice and guidance. Diversification, too, fits ill with large acreage and extensive farming. Smaller farms and intensive care are often necessary. But with the large farms and the extensive methods in existence, how are they to be changed?

And given the diversified crops, how are they to be marketed? The markets of the region are organized to take care of what the region has raised. Credit habits are such that loans are difficult to obtain except on well known staples. Isolated individuals, experimenting in new lines, do not raise enough of any one product to blast their way through marketing and credit obstacles. Community effort and coöperative action are essential. The McNary-Haugen bill may retard the effort to diversify, and does nothing to increase its chances of success.

Approach the agricultural problem from the angle of coöperative marketing. Coöperation has been preached as a cure-all; there is no doubt that it is an essential of a healthy agricultural system. But it has not been uniformly successful. The motive relied upon for loyalty to a coöperative organization is too often the simple desire for profit. The organization, in the case of staples, must cover a wide region; as a consequence, it is managed by executives remote from the individual farmer. He frequently finds that, at least for a limited period, he can make more by selling his crops through some private agency. Though his consistent loyalty is necessary to the coöperative for its eventual success, he is weaned away from it by the very motive of profit on which it principally relies to retain his support. Students of coöperation have concluded that it needs more personal and idealistic motives. The coöperators must have smaller units, in which they can take a real part and feel a real responsibility. They must be part of a coöperative community, in which disloyalty will be socially taboo. Unions of labor rarely succeed without such an atmosphere.

Or take the farm labor problem. The farmer often cannot hire enough labor when he needs it, in competition with urban industry. That farmer is most successful whose acreage is small enough, and whose family is large enough, so that he need hire little. But the children do not stay on the farm. There are few community ties to hold them, when the city beckons, with its larger rewards and richer social life. This is a problem, not of pure economics, but of rural life as a whole. A farming region is not necessarily a complete community, to which its inhabitants become attached by ties difficult to dissolve. The building of such communities is an essential task for the farmer.

Rising land values, increasing tenancy and mortgage debt, tend to disrupt rural life. Many a farmer in the past has come to regard himself really as a land speculator. Following the example of the business man, he would look for the reward of his toil chiefly in the increasing value of his property, and in years when he made a profit he would enlarge his acreage. When prices were high enough he would sell; or if he came to a time when he could not cultivate all his holdings, he would rent. Such capitalistic enterprise is out of place on the land. If the farmer belonged to a compact community of small, intensively cultivated farms, and intended to stay on the farm and have his children do so, he would not be under so much temptation of this kind. When he made a profit, he could at least invest it in industrial or other securities for a rainy day, instead of speculating in the basis of his own sustenance, and so running the risk of heavy loss, or driving future farmers close to the level of subsistence through the high cost of land. When the farmers develop a sentiment which aims at preserving and increasing the intrinsic value of the land they have by proper fertilization and improvement, but also at keeping its price low enough so that their children can be successful farmers after them, agriculture in this country will be safer.

For control of crop acreage, for scientific cultivation, for efficient marketing, for a wholesome and attractive rural life, for improvement rather than exploitation of the land, the growth of well planned and rounded agricultural communities is necessary. If the agricultural problem is related in its every aspect to the local community, much may be gained. The problem is difficult and complex; it took a long time in forming and it will take a long time to solve. No single specific will do the job. But in many regions of the United States, we believe, rural life needs rebuilding from the bottom up. When we have the organic cells of a healthy rural life—the well organized local communities—the rest will be easier. One thing the farmers and agricultural experts may do, which will not bring results this year or next, but may help greatly in the long future, is to support the organization and extension of community settlements on the land. Such settlements can serve as units of experiment and demonstration. They may bring into the picture, on a small scale, all the diverse forces necessary for successful and happy rural life. When we have learned what those forces are, and how they can best be confined, we shall be ready for broader measures.

Liberalism vs. Fascism

SINCE frank and good-natured controversy about important differences of opinion is the very life of the journalism of ideas, we would like to call particular attention to Mr. R. M. MacIver's letter on another page of this issue. Recently, the New Republic challenged the disposition of liberals throughout the world merely to denounce Fascism without taking sufficient account of its roots in Italian political history and of its place in Italian

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political development. Mr. MacIver objects. He attributes to the New Republic the statement that it might be a "good thing" for Italy to cultivate national cohesion by practising "militaristic patriotism." We cannot accept the paraphrase. The object of the article was not to discuss Fascism from the point of view of an Italian liberal who might be obliged to act as if it were on the whole "good" or bad. A liberal who would have to act only for or against it would have to act against it. The article was addressed to liberals outside of Italy who are not confined to an exclusive choice. In their case, the more liberal attitude is to regard Fascism in Italy, like Communism in Russia, as a political and social experiment which has a function in Italian political development and which cannot be understood and appraised from the formulas either of its friends or enemies.

It is not, in our opinion, a "good thing" for a nation to seek a more intense national consciousness and a livelier sense of popular responsibility for the national welfare by the violent suppression of opposition, any more than it was a "good thing" for the United States, let us say, to cement their union by waging a civil war which resulted in the extermination of slavery. But sometimes a nation drifts into a predicament from which it can be rescued only by the adoption of a violent remedy. The American people had allowed slavery to grow into an arrogant and powerful vested interest which could not survive without dividing the nation and which could not be extinguished without civil war. The North vindicated American national unity by forcibly preventing secession. It was not a "good thing" for the Unionists to cause so much suffering and shed so much blood rather than let the Southerners depart in peace, but it was at the time the lesser of two evils. In 1860 the choice was exclusive.

The analogy may help our readers to understand the service which Fascism is performing for the Italian people. At the end of the Great War, they found themselves slipping into a condition of political and social disorder which compromised their future as a nation and the authority of their government. Their state had come into existence in the sixties and seventies of the last century as, in theory, a liberal political structure. At that time, liberalism was identified with a definitely formulated group of principles and institutions which were supposed to be applicable to any civilized and articulate people. The most important of these institutions were the freedom of the press, separation of church and state, adult male suffrage and responsible parliamentary government. But after this system had been at work for a generation or two, it required a pretty hardened liberal to be satisfied with the results. It proved to be weakest at the very point where it should have been strongest. When things went wrong, as in the beginning they were naturally inclined to do, its leaders could not agree upon an analysis of what was wrong and why, and what remedy should be tried. Italy under parliamentary government was self-critical, but it could not act on its own misgivings, and, consequently, could not get any benefit, either practically or educationally, from its criticism of itself. It drifted until the government completely lost credit and authority. Aggressive patriots began to fear that unless something were done, it would soon be impossible to carry on social and economic activities. Something was done, but unfortunately not by the statesmen to whom parliamentary liberalism was still congenial.

If the liberal statesmen had exhibited understanding and courage and had united to create a constitutional ministry of national defense, as the French parliamentary leaders did when the quarrel over Dreyfus brought them to the verge of civil war, they might have saved the liberal state in Italy and spared themselves and their fellow-countrymen a great deal of suffering. But they lacked both the will and the ability to restore popular confidence in the former state as the symbol and instrument of public order. The Fascist revolution was provoked by the failure and weakness of the Italian parliament. It was an explosive reaction from a period in which the fruits of liberty and liberalism had been individual and collective irresponsibility, and it assumed the form, consequently, of ruthlessly subordinating civil and political liberty to the supposed national interest. This suppression is not a "good thing." It is an evil which, as the New Republic has stated, will in the end cost the people dear, but evil as it is, it may be the price which, in the circumstances, the Italian people are obliged to pay for their education in self-government. A government like that of Mussolini, which employs so much violence and has to inflate itself with so much hullabaloo and so many absurd pretensions, is essentially unstable and cannot, unless modified, last for long. But its short life will have served a purpose. It came into existence to meet an imperative practical and psychological need. It has aroused loyalties and expectations which are not unworthy, and its influence will be more enduring than its life. The more "liberal" group which will, we hope, supersede the Fascists after the impulse which brought them into power is exhausted, cannot return with impunity to the laxity, the irresponsibility, the administrative waste and the parliamentary corruption which caused the government of pre-Fascist Italy to forfeit the loyalty and respect of so many of the Italian people.

"To imagine," says Mr. MacIver, "that Italy is united by internal tyranny implies both a failure to understand human nature and an ignorance of the facts." But national cohesion, as we understand it, does not and cannot mean unanimity. Nationalism is the leaven rather than the loaf of bread.

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It is constrained by its original impulse to extend the range of its conquests and to contend with its adversaries. If it were not opposed, it would not work. It thrives by overcoming obstacles and at the expense of the real or supposed enemies of national cohesion. But its victories are ultimately educational rather than military. From the Fascist point of view, the Italian nation during the parliamentary régime was steadily ceasing to function as a community. It is their mission, as the Fascists see it, to invigorate the Italian commonwealth by insisting on an increased sense of responsibility for the national welfare among all groups and classes in Italy. To this end, they persecute people who disagree with them, which is indefensible, but they do not live by persecution alone. They are also trying to promote national cohesion and national welfare by their political and economic program, and no matter how much they suppress overt opposition, they cannot suppress the consequences of a policy of this kind. They are bound to stand or fall by the reaction to the operation of their program on national opinion. The method of promoting Italian national cohesion which they have proposed is costing the Italian people dear, and the conscience of the Italian people will insist on appraising the result. Thus, willy-nilly, Fascism is an experiment, the violence of whose methods will not excuse it from pleading its cause before a jury and a judge. As an effect of reforms which proposed to deal with a serious evil, it must submit itself to measurement. If the Italian people are capable of political self-education, they will preserve that part of the Fascist program which is useful to them and discard that which is not.

In the present condition of society, a workable government must consist of an adjustable compromise between liberty and authority. Parliamentary government in Italy sacrificed authority to liberty. The government of Mussolini is sacrificing liberty to authority. He is vindicating authority by using violence to suppress liberty, and, consequently, the anti-Fascists will at the appropriate time have to vindicate liberty by combating violence with violence. Grievous as will be the consequences of the clash, it seems to have been necessary in order to arouse in the Italian people a consciousness of the value of both authority and liberty. France rallied to the Second Empire from motives similar to those which have induced Italians to succumb to Mussolini, and the Second Empire failed dismally in the end, as Fascism will in one way or another fail. But after it had been tried and had failed, France was able for the first time to set up a republican government which preserved public order while at the same time gradually increasing the scope of French political and civil liberties. It is not an unreasonable hope that after Fascism, like Napoleonism, digs its own grave, the Italian people also will know enough to create a liberal republic which will know how to assert its desirable authority.

The difference between Mr. MacIver and ourselves is traceable to a difference in the meanings which we attach to the word liberalism. The New Republic is not in his sense an "exponent of liberal principles." If there are any abstract liberal principles, we do not know how to formulate them. Nor if they are formulated by others do we recognize their authority. Liberalism, as we understand it, is an activity. It is the effort to emancipate human life by means of the discovery and the realization of truth. But the truth only emerges as a function of individual and corporate life, and it needs for its vindication the subordination of principles to method. Principles do not exist for a liberal in the form of rules which are formulated by reason and which human life is under some obligation to obey. They are vistas and clues which in the circumstances may or may not work. They have to be tested by definition and discussion and they have to be embodied in projects which are subsequently modified, abandoned or accepted for further trial. They are not by way of being vindicated until they are wrought into the continuing experience of an individual or a community. The liberals of the Italian parliamentary régime took their "principles" too much for granted. They did not initiate reforms in order to disarm criticism. Nor did they fight for their faith when it was attacked. It was the Fascists who acted on principle when action was needed, and it is, consequently, Fascist principles which are now being tried. Probably in the end the Italian liberals will have to appeal to violence in order to reassert their right to govern Italy, and the critical test of their liberalism will then begin. For they not only have to brave on its behalf privation and death; they will not only have to treat their opponents more liberally than their opponents have treated them, but hardest of all, they will have to admit their own past faults by recognizing what there is in the work of their opponents which is entitled to be perpetuated.

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The Trade Unions Survey the General Strike

BY a majority of one million and three-quarters in a vote of not quite four millions, the conference of Trade Union Executives has, after a two days' discussion, approved the action of the Trade Union Council, during the general strike of last May. Put in another way, this means that only three trade unions, numbering some two hundred thousand votes, added their strength to the eight hundred thousand votes of the miners. The conference, in short, was an overwhelming victory for the General Council.

The debates were held in private, and are said to have been pungent. What have been alone published are the reports of the Trade Union Council and the Miners' Executive, which is a comment on the former. I propose to summarize these, and to make some reflections upon the general issue.

The General Council argues that the Miners' Federation entrusted them with powers to get the best terms possible out of the government and the owners. After the Samuel Report, and the breakdown of negotiations, the miners' slogan, "Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day," was not practical politics. When Mr. Baldwin made the issue a constitutional one, it was necessary to find some intermediary who would draw up terms both parties could honorably accept. Sir Herbert Samuel did this, and his famous Memorandum offered a suitable basis for negotiation. The refusal of the miners to accept this meant that the trade unions were to go on fighting for an undeclared objective. This, in the Council's view, was unreasonable and could only have resulted in the serious destruction of the trade unions. By calling off the strike, the Council took its battalions in good order off the field. Thereby it saved British labor from what would have been the most disastrous defeat in history. The miners showed themselves lacking in leadership and practical insight. They never knew what they wanted. And they did not live up to their understanding with the Council that the latter was to decide the adequacy of the terms offered. They never seem fully to have grasped the responsibility of the Council to the rest of the trade union movement.

The miners' reply is a singularly effective piece of rhetoric, and, like most rhetoric, strong in what it affirms while it is weak in what it denies. The General Council, it argues, never had any authority to negotiate for the miners, except upon the basis of no reduction in wages and no increase in hours. It never made effective plans for carrying on the strike until the event was at hand. It never properly consulted the miners while it lasted. It called it off when the rank and file was still ardent and determined. And it never obtained, despite all its pledges to the movement, promises that there should be no victimization by employers. The Council, in short, deserted the miners and betrayed its own constituents.

The truth, of course, as is usual in great historical events, lies midway between the parties to the debate. The issue turns, I think, upon the answers one gives to two questions: (1) Did the miners agree that the settlement should be made by the Council? (2) What was the general strike for?

Now what clearly emerges from the Conference is that the Council and miners answer these questions in quite opposite ways. Upon the first, the Council is clear that it had authority to settle, that the miners had handed over to it the full control of the dispute. They were to be consulted, of course, but the final voice was in the Council. To the latter, any other view is untenable simply because, on any other view, the whole trade union movement would have been under the control of the Miners' Federation until the latter chose to declare itself satisfied with the terms offered. As the miners were never satisfied, the general strike would, on this view, have gone on as long as the mining dispute itself.

The miners' reply is that they did not bind themselves in this way because they could not. The executive was pledged to no reduction of wages and no increase of hours by the vote of the coal fields; it could not, therefore, have parted with its authority for any other purpose except this. The Council ought not, therefore, to have accepted the Samuel Memorandum, since it should have known a priori that the miners could not accept it. So far as the Federation was concerned it was ultra vires.

The fact is that, upon this first question, the minds of the Council and the Miners' Executive were never at one. Each understood their relationship in a quite different way. It is unthinkable that the General Council should have pledged themselves to the miners' formula; on the other hand, I can find no clear document in which the miners bind themselves to accept the views of the Council. No one can seriously doubt that, strategically, the General Council was right. It is impossible to conduct a general strike unless it has full negotiating powers in its hands. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly open to serious criticism for not having,

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long before the strike began, arrived at a complete agreement with the Miners' Federation as to the limit of acceptable terms. That is particularly true because several members of the General Council undoubtedly believed the miners should accept the Samuel Report, as later, all believed they should accept the Samuel Memorandum. On the documents, however, the Federation's position is, I think, unassailable. Messrs. Herbert Smith and Cook said many things, some vague, some clear, some unintelligible. But they never said that the Council was to act as a plenipotentiary on their behalf. I add that my own knowledge of those days leaves me quite certain that the view now taken by the Council was taken in the strike itself.

Upon the second question, also, there is a fundamental divergence of view between the two bodies. The General Council took the view, I think, consistently from the start, that the purpose of the strike was to drive the government and the owners to reopen negotiations on the lines of the Samuel Report; in what those negotiations might issue, they had no definite view, and certainly they had not tied themselves to the miners' slogan. The miners took the quite contrary view that the object was to prevent any decrease in wages or increase in hours. Any settlement, accordingly, of which their slogan was not an integral part meant defeat; more, any settlement made in despite of them meant a betrayal. Neither party, I believe, understood the attitude of the other until the Tuesday before the strike was called off. Each was, accordingly, genuinely shocked to discover how different was the other's conception of the conflict.

Now it is clear, when these questions have been answered in this way, that the general strike was bound to end in defeat. In military terms, there was no prior agreement either as to the purpose of the battle or where the command lay. The government, which, on this showing, had only to wait for the discrepancies to reveal themselves, was bound to win.

Certain other pertinent questions remain. The miners argue, with much justice, that when the strike was called off, the spirit of the men was unbroken. A few more days, they argue, and the fight would have been won. I have heard American radicals argue in the same sense. I find it impossible to accept this view. There is no reason to suppose that the government was weaker on the ninth day of the strike than on the first; rather the contrary. A few more days were not in the least likely to have brought the Council and the miners to any closer harmony of purpose. A few more days would, in several places, have revealed gaps in the ranks of the strikers. In a few more days, a defeat that was at least orderly might easily have become a rout.

The miners argue, in the second place, that the Council should not have called off the strike without guarantees against victimization. Here, I agree with their criticism, to the extent that, at the famous interview with Mr. Baldwin, it would have been wise to have insisted upon those guarantees; on my reading of that interview, Mr. Bevin was asking for them when he was sidetracked by Mr. Thomas. But, on the larger question, the miners forget that their refusal to accept the Council's view meant that the latter had nothing to build upon. They were bound to appear in the guise of defeated combatants; and Mr. Baldwin took care so to represent them. Had they been able to inform him of an accepted settlement with Sir Herbert Samuel, the situation here would have been quite different. Anything that endangered the implementing of that agreement would have endangered his position in the country. But there was no settlement to implement, and Mr. Baldwin, for over a week, could be painted as the savior of England.

The miners argue, thirdly, that nothing bound the government, on Sir Herbert Samuel's own showing, to enforce the Memorandum; that they know, from official sources, that their acceptance of it would have gravely embarrassed the government; and that the Council knew throughout that Sir Herbert could not pledge the government. The whole thing, they say, was a trap to compel them to accept wage reductions.

That there is a penumbra of mystery about the Samuel Memorandum is undeniable. It is true that: (1) the document was unofficial; (2) that Sir Herbert Samuel told the General Council it was unofficial; (3) that the government would have been gravely embarrassed had the miners accepted it. But it must also be remembered that: (1) the Minister of Labor knew of each stage of Sir Herbert Samuel's effort; (2) that the Prime Minister knew of its inception and general outline; (3) that unofficial negotiators other than Sir Herbert Samuel were informed by unimpeachable authority—I speak whereof I know—that such intervention on such lines would be acceptable to the government; (4) that the embarrassment caused to Mr. Baldwin by an acceptance of the Memorandum would have lain in the two facts (a) that its terms were an overwhelming defeat of the owners and (b) that public opinion was so definitely pro-miner and anti-owner *at that stage* that the government would have been compelled to implement them. The miners, I believe, were right in the sense that the Council had no document signed by the Prime Minister; they were quite wrong in the sense that all the moral certainties were on the Council's side. It is probable that Mr. Baldwin would have had to face three resignations had the miners accepted the Samuel terms and had attempts at their enforcement followed; but I have good authority for saying that acceptance without enforcement would have led to one resignation which would have brought the Baldwin government to an end.

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We are here, of course, in the realm of imponderables. The main thing is that the trade union movement should learn certain obvious lessions that emerge from the strike. These are, in essence, the following:

1. Before any general strike is called, the detailed objectives must be agreed upon.
2. All the trade unions concerned must entrust full and final negotiating powers to the General Council.
3. It is, at best, dubious whether the unions concerned in public utilities: e. g., railways, mines, electricity, are the front line trenches. Their stoppage is spectacular. But the services they perform are so necessary that modern governments either know how to run them directly, or can, by foreign purchases, replace the goods they supply. It is, therefore, probably wiser to call out workers in industries of a private character and support them from the earnings of the others. The conflict will last longer, but the loss to private industry is heavier and the government is deprived of its chief moral weapon: i. e., the threat to the Constitution and its chief propaganda weapon, the wireless.
4. Any general strike of which the objective is undefined must either be defeated, or become revolutionary. If the latter happens, it will be defeated except in such circumstances as a protest against war, or against a dictatorship.
5. The preparations for a general strike can never be improvised.

Upon this last question, much might be said, and a great deal of it would not be to the credit of the General Council. But the conference was not called to discuss technique, and the latter depends on a reorganization of the structure of British trade-unionism which is unlikely for some time to come.

HAROLD J. LASKI.

London.

Consumers in Wonderland

V—In Which the Authors Give Some Suggestions as to the Way Out of Wonderland

O Mouse, do you know the way out of this pool?

PUBLICATION of the first articles in this series has brought many inquiries from readers. It is widely conceded that the consumer is in Wonderland, but what, specifically, is the way out? A fair question deserving a fair answer. In this article we propose to outline some of the chief agencies which are now blazing trails out of Wonderland, together with a few suggestions for a more direct exit. We only wish that the answer might be more complete.

For the consumer to buy necessities and comforts (luxuries lie somewhat outside the picture) on the basis of impartial scientific advice, backed with laboratory analysis and comparative test, implies a revolution in the time-honored relationship between buyer and seller. It is not a condition to be achieved tomorrow, nor is there any royal road along which to march. The seller has ever reserved the right to puff his goods, to endow them with virtues beyond the arts of chemistry and physics to define, to impute unique and even mystical qualities to them, to dazzle and intrigue the buyer by any method that came to hand. Meanwhile, caveat emptor. Modern merchandising gives an impression of greater frankness than that maintained in the old horse-trading days; it is undoubtedly speedier in consummating a sale; but an unbiased comparison of the advertising with the facts shows that the seeming frankness is often only a component of a new kind of mysticism. Meanwhile, with the coming of mass production, with the possibility of turning out all manner of necessities and comforts in unlimited quantities, the time-honored technique of trading becomes increasingly irrelevant and immaterial, and the substitution of science for the more romantic forms of salesmanship is as necessary, and one hopes as inevitable, as the substitution of astronomy for astrology.

Mrs. Helen Woodward, in her book Through Many Windows, gives us a sample of what may be expected under the prevailing canons of trade. She is set at the task of preparing advertising copy for an infant's food, and her superior guides her pen with these words:

> As for this baby-food stuff, for God's sake put some sob stuff in it. You know. And make it beautiful, too. Make it beautiful, make the words sing. Heavens! There isn't a woman in the world that cares about facts. That kind of stuff you write for the Woman's Home Companion, that's what gets 'em. Tears! Make 'em weep.

There are three chief methods by which the consumer can avoid the weeping if he so desires. . . . Always provided that there are women in the world who care more for a sound baby food than for the shedding of tears. Science can aid the consumer through standardization, through specifications, through publishing the results of impartial tests on competitive or other products.

The government defines standard grades for milk; the cement industry has defined the quality

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of cement. In so far as the quality of common articles may be guaranteed by the government, or by voluntary agreement on the part of manufacturers, the consumer is automatically protected. Such protection is still in its infancy, however.

Science can aid the consumer by helping him buy to specification, which means defining quality *in advance,* rather than experimenting with it afterwards. Large intermediate consumers stand to make vast savings in purchases through utilizing the specification technique. For the ultimate consumer, the method is more difficult to handle, unless it takes the form of statements on labels to the effect that such goods have been made to a designated and authoritative specification.

Thirdly, science can help the consumer by impartial testing. Imagine, if you can—the concept is a novel one—a great series of testing laboratories manned by impartial physicists, chemists and engineers, putting all makes of electrical refrigerators, oil heaters, baby foods, cleaning compounds, cough mixtures, breakfast foods, tooth pastes, paints, motor cars at a given price level, through the mill of quantitative analysis, and publishing in parallel columns just the cold figures covering the performance of each make. In the face of such analysis—even when it was only potential—how long could the higher salesmanship, and the higher weeping, be maintained? It would collapse like a punctured balloon.

The principles underlying the work of the Bureau of Standards at Washington have been ever in the back of our minds as coming nearest to furnishing the ideal technique for protecting and informing the buyer. Better than any other single institution, it illustrates the possibilities of transferring the conception of standards from the realm of theory to the realm of the concrete. But that transfer is still far from accomplished.

The Bureau saves the federal government in the neighborhood of $100,000,000 a year on purchases of supplies and equipment. But it has also made great savings for private industry, as well as for the consumer at large. For instance: as a result of its work on builders' hardware, one hundred non-standard finishes have been cut to twenty-five, saving the industry $10,000,000 a year. Following work for the petroleum and automobile industries, $100,000,000 annually has been reclaimed from the crude oil supply in the form of additional gasoline. Gasoline saved through increased use of cord tires—which require on the average one horse-power less per car, and whose superior efficiency was first definitely shown by the Bureau —amounts to no less than $40,000,000 each year.

Which brings us to ask a blunt and necessary question. Why does a service run by taxpayers' money refuse information covering competitive products—to that same taxpayer? The answer is obvious, but not altogether convincing. It is argued that the general release of test results covering competitive products by name of maker will promote commercial injustice. K's oil may never have been submitted for test. A's oil, which made a high rank, has changed its process and is now inferior. This point is well taken, of course, but is it important enough to freeze out the common citizen to eternity? Release would make a disturbance, here and there—granted. Some injustice would be done—granted. But facts are facts, and the possibility of their misuse is something that must always be faced. Galileo had some facts that, first and last, upset a good many people. Should they have been bottled up forever?

The Department of Agriculture does a great deal of work for the ultimate consumer in the field of household goods and equipment, and in the form of advice and service to the farmer. The Bureau of Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture comes the nearest of any government service to the problems of the ultimate consumer. But for the study of those problems affecting materials, equipment and arrangement of 20,000,000 American homes, the total appropriation is only about $120,000 a year—the merest pittance in contrast with the great sums which the government devotes to the interests of manufacturers and business generally.

The state of North Dakota easily takes the lead, in local legislation, in supplying the consumer with information about the goods he buys. It has established full and comprehensive food, drug and beverage inspection laws, with specifications defining color, freshness, potency, and other essential characteristics. Grades of vegetables, fruits, spices, etc., are defined in great detail. The state laboratory provides the unusual service of publicly listing the results of tests on milk and of giving numerical scores, based on excellence, to groceries, confectioners' shops, restaurants, bakeries, meat markets, slaughter houses, bottling works and wholesale houses throughout the state.

The government has no monopoly on the agencies which provide scientific information on consumer's goods. Some of the great corporation laboratories—like that of the General Electric Company—rival the Bureau of Standards. Such information, however, is bought and paid for, and normally only findings of a general nature are given out to the public. But what a story could be told if all the private laboratories opened their files!

There are also the laboratories which make a business of testing for a fee, serving their clients effectively and very confidentially. Only rarely do their findings ever reach the general consumer. It is significant that at least one of these laboratories will no longer accept a testing assignment *if the results are to form the basis of a sales campaign.* It has found by bitter experience what an enthusiastic copy-writer can do to a careful and

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honest report. There are the university laboratories which occasionally carry on tests of the greatest public importance—like the heating furnace experiment at Brown, already referred to. There are a few research agencies operating more or less directly in the consumer's interest—the Good Housekeeping Institute, The New York Herald-Tribune Institute, and others. Finally, there are the professional societies and the trade associations.

Far and away the leader among the technical societies, from the point of view we are considering, is the American Medical Association. It is as fearless as it is explicit in the exposure of quackery. Its Council of Pharmacy and Chemistry and its Bureau of Investigation are continuously busy in the public interest. It has haled untold rascals before the bar of public opinion; broken up hundreds of shell games. On the strength of its quantitative analyses, it has been sued for libel many times, to an aggregate of many millions. The total damages so far collected from the Association have been precisely one cent—awarded by a jury, on what was probably a nice legal point, to the makers of Wine of Cardui. But the findings of the Medical Association, despite their great value, seldom find their way into newspapers and magazines.

Of the professional engineering societies, perhaps the standardization work inaugurated by the automotive engineers has had the greatest influence upon the goods of the ordinary citizen. Standard rims make for easy interchange of tires; standard bolts and nuts for quick replacement of worn or damaged parts, as well as for great savings in manufacturing cost. Altogether the society has worked out and put into practice some 600 standards for the automobile industry. The total savings are reliably estimated at over $750,000,000 a year. Even at this, however, one of the presidents of the Automotive Engineers has declared that for every dollar put into engineering of all kinds, including research, twenty dollars is put into automobile advertising.

For a complex set of reasons, too involved to discuss here, it is likely that real certification of materials and products to the consumer will be done in this country, not by the technical societies, but by the government or by private foundation, possibly with the trade associations collaborating.

If there had existed a militant organization of consumers, with a staff of commodity experts, these articles would never have been written. The federation of consumers against the competitive onslaught of organized producers bent on securing a larger and larger share of the national income is sooner or later inevitable. This is particularly true, because the interest of the government itself tends to lie on the side of the group having the most articulate organization: in most places, and particularly with the federal government, on the side of the manufacturer.

The Educational Buyers' Association, whom we have quoted, is a thoroughly competent organization on the side of the large consumer, such as a university. It publishes a series of reports on goods, in which various makes of the same article are carefully analyzed in the laboratory by students at the University of Chicago. The results are assembled in complete form and circulated to members, thus placing them in much the same position, with respect to certainty of value for money expended, as though the tests made on the same commodities by the Bureau of Standards had been put into their hands. The several commodities are fully identified as to maker and brand.

Mail-order buying has great possibilities for economy on staple goods susceptible of exact description. There are enough good specifications already available to build a sizable mail-order business on this principle alone. There is a genuine public service as well as a fortune in it for the man who first makes a beginning. At a very moderate relative cost, hundreds of other specifications could be set up in coöperation with the Bureau of Standards, the Bureau of Home Economics, and the trade associations. What is the burden of writing the most careful specification for aluminum ware—say, $5,000 at the outside—in contrast with a turnover of a half-million dollars of such ware a year in a single New York store?

The department store is not so susceptible to the technique, in all its lines, as is the mail-order house. Many of its goods have a fashion or fad appeal, others are frankly luxuries. But a substantial proportion of department-store business—staple textiles, hardware, cooking utensils, seeds, garden tools, sewing machines and household appliances—is well within the specification limit, and capable of furnishing immense savings in retail distribution.

A multi-millionaire of an inquiring turn of mind could probably perpetuate his name to eternity by endowing a laboratory and information bureau on a scale sufficiently large to make a real impression upon the buyer's consciousness. "The Consumers' Foundation," he might call it. Under a group of public-spirited and disinterested trustees, chosen mainly from the professions, its experts could afford to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, and furthermore, they could put their efforts into fields where the protection now afforded is particularly inadequate. Articles that bulk large on the family budget, and which are not now covered by analysis in either government or private outposts, should probably be the first concern of such a laboratory. Business houses desiring sincerely to support the Foundation's work—and there would be many of them—could be publicly listed as preferred suppliers, if and when they met the laboratory's requirements.

If a million citizens could be persuaded to invest a dollar each per year for verified facts about

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their purchases, wonderful things could be done. In relation to service rendered, scientific work is normally the cheapest thing in the world. It is probable, furthermore, that a service paid for will be more extensively used than free hand-outs by the government. The kind of information which is most useful is not a learned treatise on the histology and etiology of a given article, but something translatable directly into an order on a Main Street store.

It is the consumer's move. If he wants to leave Wonderland, there are ways out, and the clear possibility of drastically reducing the cost of living. He can get his money's worth if he is willing to organize to get it. The market always responds to organized pressure. Pending the coming of organization, the individual can create no little nuisance value in the right direction and learn a lot besides, by adopting some, or all, of the following suggestions:

Ask advertisers to produce the scientific facts upon which their claims are based.

Ask the same of door-to-door canvassers.

Ask the same of storekeepers and dealers.

Ask your Congressman to obtain the release of government information, particularly that of the Bureaus of Standards and Chemistry, on goods, by maker's name.

Get competitive sales arguments together and watch them flatten out.

Refuse to deal with firms making fantastic or misleading claims, or guilty of unfair competition. Write them to that effect.

Call the attention of editors to misrepresentations, either known or apparent, in advertising. You will find such, we believe, in every popular magazine.

Encourage your local sealer of weights and measures. Give him more work to do.

Encourage the Better Business Bureaus. Give them more work to do.

Encourage your local food control official. Find out what his laboratory is doing.

Read labels carefully; compare them with the advertising. Discrepancies between the two measure, in part, the extent of misrepresentation.

Look for weights on package goods; figure out how much you are paying *per pound*. Then look at your bank balance.

Write for government bulletins which analyze specific products, or groups of products.

When you hear the word "guarantee," laugh heartily.

When you read a testimonial, laugh heartily.

Ask the nearest college to run a test for you. It will educate the students, as well as yourself. Let manufacturers know the result of the test.

Encourage manufacturers of sound products, competently and honestly described, to keep it up. Give them your business.

Make your own products at home until certain industries—such as insecticides, floor waxes, furniture polishes, cleaning compounds, fertilizers—improve their standards and pass on the economies of mass production. The government will tell you how. This is, necessarily, only a stop-gap.

Never believe the findings of a test as advertised. They are often doctored.

Never believe advertisements of competitive goods (except in the scientific journals), and say so, loudly, clearly and on every possible occasion. Thus may ultimately come copy that you can believe, copy backed by impartial, scientific authority.

These instructions will make the super-salesman smile—as he has every right to today. But some day he may smile out of the other side of his mouth.

Of one thing we can be sure. The time has gone—possibly forever—when it is possible for each of us to become expert on all the things we have to buy. Even the wisest can have knowledge of only a negligible section of the field. What sense, then, in a specialized industrial society if each individual must learn by trial and error again and forever again?

Some day, somewhere, somehow, science must step into this wilderness, and provide the knowledge, wholesale, that no one of us can ever hope to learn at retail, and which we now try to acquire at such a pitiful, needless cost.

STUART CHASE and F. J. SCHLINK.

(This is the fifth and last of a series of articles. They will be included, in greatly expanded form, as part of the material in a book by Messrs. Chase and Schlink, to be published this spring by the Macmillan Company, New York, under the title, Getting Your Money's Worth.)

O'Keefe and Matisse

MISS O'Keefe is perhaps the most original painter in America today. The present show of her recent work leaves one wondering as to what new aspects of life she will make her own. I do not wish to dwell on her paintings as separate canvases, although in The Wave, and the sun blazing behind The Shelton, and in what is nominally one of her flower-interiors, as well as in several more abstract designs, she has produced pictures upon whose excellence one might well linger for a while. The point is that all these paintings come from a central stem; and it is because the stem is so well grounded in the earth and the plant itself so lusty, that it keeps on producing new shoots and efflorescences, now through the medium of apples, pears, egg-plants, now through leaves and stalks, now in high buildings and sky-scapes, all intensified by abstraction into symbols of quite different significance.

Miss O'Keefe has not discovered a new truth of optics, like Monet, nor invented a new method of æsthetic organization, like the Cubists; and while she paints with a formal skill which combines both objective representation and abstraction, it is not by this nor by her brilliant variations in color that her work is original. What distinguishes Miss

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O'Keefe is the fact that she has discovered a beautiful language, with unsuspected melodies and rhythms, and has created in this language a new set of symbols; by these means she has opened up a whole area of human consciousness which has never, so far as I am aware, been so completely revealed in either literature or in graphic art. Unlike the painters who have taken refuge in abstract art to hide their inner barrenness, Miss O'Keefe has something to communicate; and the human significance of her pictures is enriched rather than contracted by the symbols and the formal figures she employs.

In thinking of Miss O'Keefe, my mind drifts back inevitably to another distinguished American artist, Albert Pinkham Ryder. He, too, in his landscapes and in his more deliberately symbolic pictures, sought to use the objective fact as a means of projecting a more interior and less articulate world; but, like Blake and Redon, his mind ran most easily in the groove of literary myths, and in his paintings of Time Riding Around a Racetrack or the Witches in Macbeth or Jonah and the Whale, he was dependent upon irrelevant suggestions for his theme, conveying by literary allusion feelings for which he had no direct language. Miss O'Keefe has found her symbols without the aid of literary accessories; hers is a direct expression upon the plane of painting, and not an illustration by means of painting of ideas that have been verbally formulated. Indeed, Miss O'Keefe's world cannot be verbally formulated; for it touches primarily on the experiences of love and passion. Whitman said that the best was that which must be left unsaid, and anyone who has reflected upon his passionate experiences is always a little appalled at the fact that they become so inarticulate in actual life, or so evasive, so skittishly evasive, when they seize hold of the poet.

The premonitions of love, its pre-nuptial state as it were, are the constant themes of poetry; but in literature love and passion retain something of the desire of the moth for the star; when we become conscious of them in other terms, we are faced either by the empty swaggering of a Swinburne or a Wilde, whose personal history gives one reason to doubt if they had anything more than a literary background for their emotions, or by the all too literal allusions of a Rochester. The fact is that words strike love stone-cold; what it is, is something much too deep in the blood for words to ejaculate; and when driven to such an indirect medium, the result is not the original quality of passion or sexual intimacy at all, but obscenity—which is but the ashes from an extinguished fire.

What is true of love holds for other emotions and feelings: if their warm impalpability is to be extracted from consciousness, they must be transformed by painting into their own special symbols, and not first done into a verbal medium; a blasted tree may convey more human anguish than the most scarified and tear-stained face, labeled Antigone. Perceiving this fact, and creating images that are as palpable as flesh and as austere as a geometric figure, Miss O'Keefe has created a noble instrument of expression, which speaks clearly to all who have undergone the same experiences or been affected by the same perceptions. She has beautified the sense of what it is to be a woman; she has revealed the intimacies of love's juncture with the purity and the absence of shame that lovers feel in their meeting; she has brought what was inarticulate and troubled and confused into the realm of conscious beauty, where it may be recalled and enjoyed with a new intensity; she has, in sum, found a language for experiences that are otherwise too intimate to be shared. To do this steadily in fresh forms, and to express by new expedients in design—as in the filling of a large canvas with the corolla of a flower—her moods and meanings: these are the signs of a high æsthetic gift. A minor painter might achieve this once; and would perhaps carve a prosperous career by doing it over and over again; Miss O'Keefe, on the contrary, has apparently inexhaustible depths to draw upon, and each new exhibition adds richness and variety to her central themes. Her place is secure.

> If this be madness, and upon me proved,
> I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Miss O'Keefe's paintings and the recent retrospective show of Matisse remind one that the pure artist is always more deeply in touch with life, even with life considered merely in the dress of our own day, than the conventional artist who does the accepted thing. Superficially speaking, it would seem that commercial illustrators are of all people the ones most closely in touch with "life": do they not have to meet business men, face actual problems in advertising, produce marketable goods? Far from it: there is a complete lack of living relationship in their magazine covers and subway ads: the girl whose skin you love to touch tells nothing about our own day. Such drawings are a complete blank; if an Elie Faure were to examine them five hundred years hence, the only inference he could draw would be that our civilization lacked an æsthetic sense.

Miss O'Keefe's paintings, on the other hand, would tell much about the departure of Victorian prudery and the ingrowing consciousness of sex, in resistance to a hard external environment; were Sherwood Anderson's novels destroyed, were every vulgar manifestation in the newspapers forgotten, were the papers of the Freudian psychologists burned, her pictures would still be a witness; for, apart from their proper beauty and significance, they reveal and refocus many of the dominant aspects of our as a conventional painter of "studies"; gradually, two things as a conventional painter of "studies"; gradually, two things developed in his work: a clarity of structure, a feeling for what we were executing in other forms with the aid of equations and mechanical drawings, and, side by side with this, a certain lush sensual quality, conveyed partly by color and partly by sleek oriental women and soft upholstery. Is not this the essence of our contemporary spiritual dilemma? There is war between our vital needs and our mechanical routine. Looking at Matisse's pictures, I remembered a factory I had recently inspected, in which the machinery was here and there furtively plastered with pictures of variously naked hussies, cut out from contemporary magazines of "art." There was the exact equivalent in "life." Is not the conflict, indeed, pretty obvious everywhere? The artist, unconsciously perhaps, attempts to transmute it into beauty; but the divorce is a critical one, and the passage to beauty not easy. Matisse succeeds best, I think, in his still-lifes, where color and form are orchestrally handled in superb, intricate, vibrant designs.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

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Some Advice to Writers

EVERY few weeks some young man or woman comes around, asking: (1) Is there a job for me here? (2) I want to write, what'll I do about it? The answer to (1) is, Sorry; the answer to (2) is, Sit down and write, damn it. Neither answer gives satisfaction; in particular the second is considered unhelpfully frugal, and causes its recipients, as they leave, to reef in their belts hungrily. Evidently a nine-course meal was expected. Against future requests of the same sort, I have secured seven or eight thousand calories of advice from an old gentleman who knows what he is talking about. Some of it is impossible to carry out, and some of it is a little solemn, but on the whole it fills the bill. So here it is.

Write? Everyone can write. That's just the trouble. Everyone can talk, everyone is possessed of a mother tongue, and, at its simplest, writing is merely a setting down of talk upon paper. Therefore, from one point of view, there is no need to learn to write. Just talk into the typewriter. Ninety percent of today's writing is no more than that.

I shall assume, however (with considerable tact), that you do not wish to belong to the 90 percent, but are ready to believe that writing is something that can be learned; something that, like playing the piano or painting portraits, cannot be done at all unless it is learned, studied, practised and sweated over. I shall assume, with even greater tact, that you are willing to tie yourself down to a program which will be as arduous and, for long, as fruitless as finger exercises or drawing from life. I shall further assume, with the height of disregard for reality, that, like the painter and the musician, you will throw the first two years' product into the waste basket, and that, if by mischance you sell anything written within that time to a magazine, you will repent of it and bow your head in shame. There is a maxim used by artists to humble those they teach: love the work, but hate the result. Begin, then, in that frame of mind and you will go a long way.

There is no established procedure, no set of finger exercises for learning to write. Your own ingenuity and constancy must be your guide. Words are to be your raw material, so of course you must know all about them. They are variable and fluid; keep them always in that transient state, turning them over and over, pairing them, matching them, discarding them, picking them up again until some of their innumerable facets have begun to appear to you. Avoid, above all things, that easy coagulation of them into recurring phrases, into the rubber stamps which mark the lazy ear and the jellifying mind. If a phrase recurs to you, do not think well of it because you do not find it in the work of others; every writer has his own private rubber stamps along with those that are public property.

As you listen to people talking around you, you will be struck by how large a part of what they say is the result of sheer habit. Each of them possesses, unknown to himself, several dozen or several hundred grooves, into one of which his speech or his thought will inevitably fall if you listen long enough. Some of these habits may be labeled laziness, others may be ascribed to prejudice, unconscious mimicry, memory, background and many other patterns of mind. In writing, these habits are less obvious, but they exist to a formidable, to an altogether discouraging degree. Probably the most important thing you can do, as you learn, is to break up your habits, your solidifying ways of saying things, as soon as you are aware of them. Don't let them get ahead of you. Habits are necessary, of course; almost everything we do is habit, but you must form your habits and not let them form you. If you feel, some time before the expiration of your apprenticeship, that a style is growing upon you, smash it, change it; the chances are that you really have as yet no style worth mentioning, so the destruction will actually destroy nothing. Copy other writers, both good and bad, deliberately; write serious imitations and parodies of them, but never copy or make fun of any one of them for very long. Make no long-term favorites nor hold in respect the detail of any writer, because, while you cannot hope to recapture what makes him great, the details of him can be reproduced with surprising faithfulness.

Your style is only a tool, and should not be an end in itself, so long as there is anything you really want to say. The latter possession is by far the more valuable, but it can be warped and defeated by lack of the former. Don't sit back and mutter, I have nothing to say. Having something to say can be learned by anyone of good intelligence and industry. And don't complain that you lack imagination. Imagination, up to a certain point, can be acquired; given a small seed of it, careful watering will make it grow to an astonishing size. For nothing grows out of a vacuum; imagination does not proceed out of a void, but from something else; it is the electric fusion of already existing parts. If your mind is full of things seen, remembered, of people observed and overheard, a systematic shuffling and rubbing of these small fragments together will produce a spark of some sort. In the same way, artificial and repeated conjunction of little details which, separately, suggest no comment worth putting down, will in time and through practice effect a brilliant marriage of trifles, about which something must be said. Imagination and the impulse to speak, then, are largely phenomena of cause and effect; since they are not gifts of the gods, but are born in your own head, look to it that your head is well stored and often replenished.

I do not need to repeat all the old advice about observing, watching, listening and noting down. Every writer is told to practise these habits, and if he is any good he knows that he ought to do so, instinctively. But there are two stages in this process. The elementary stage is that of promiscuously acquiring the habit, the task, daily, hourly repeated, of looking at and hearing everything; it is learning to make with ease the efforts of attention and retention. The second stage comes later, at the point where you begin to ask yourself, What am I looking for? Certain things in your surroundings are relevant, others are not. To what shall you choose that they be relevant? Once more, habits begin to harden, and it is necessary to break them up. You may find, for instance, that from the people and scenes about you, you are beginning to pick out what is relevant to the tragic, the comic, the mysterious, or the peculiar aspect of them. One of these views of life, and ways of writing about it, will eventually be more suited to your bent than the others, but do not get the habit of looking through a certain color of spectacles too early.

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Keep changing your estimate of what is relevant. Force what is irrelevant one day to become relevant the day after.

People are your game. Whether your success is destined to be in dollars or in praise only, other people will always be the thing most worth writing about. Keep your eye for them perpetually fresh. Nothing is more necessary than this almost moral attitude, and few things are more difficult. In effect, I am asking you never to allow yourself to be bored by other people. Boredom lumps them together, and classification is fatal in those who would write about them. They are all different; get that in your head and never let it get out. They are all worth writing about; get that into your head also. Learn to look at and listen to each one of them as if you were confronted by an entirely new specimen, unique in all the world, and learn to examine each one as if you had never seen him before. Approval or disapproval, like or dislike, must be rooted out of your soul, where writing is concerned; entertain no moral or emotional judgments, but perceptions, facts and understanding only.

Inspiration? A question that is sure to be raised. It's not a visitation, of course, but is inside you all the time. Don't wait for it—that is an old saw—keep on writing and writing and every so often it will come roaring up out of your insides and take the pencil from your hands. Nobody knows how to coax it up. Don't press, as the golfers say; learn to lie fallow and soak up the sun; the shy beast will come up or not, as he chooses.

Not very good advice, perhaps. Hard to understand and harder to follow. So let's end simply and easily. Avoid jobs in publishing houses. Hate paper and ink except when it says something. Read, but keep away from literary garrets, salons, cliques and gossip, and the less you see of your colleagues the better, for most of them don't amount to the head of a pin. Keep your paper smooth and your Waterman clean, and let the light come in over your left shoulder.

ROBERT LITTELL.

Winter Harvest

Beneath the dangerous sky and through the level
Length of far fields, there is no petaled thing.
Grim are the trees' stark branches, there is evil
In the warning of wind, in the starved crow's burnished wing.

Yet who shall say that sky and wind and flowerless
Field may not know their own disastrous bloom?
Surely the insolent eager fingers are tireless
And deft that brought all colored things to doom . . .

Appeasement there is for even spectral hunger:
And is this their season, the pale light presences
That glimmer and smile, and wail with the wind, and linger
By my window-panes till frost-flowers wreathe on these?

Reapers of barren sheaves, adepts of utter
Darkness, they garner dearth with hollow strife;
The uncolored lightless harvest is not bitter
To them perhaps for whom this death is life.

MARJORIE MEEKER.

The Bandwagon

BEHOLD THE MASTER

Mr. Kellogg toys with states, republican and royal, with an ease and a sureness that make Mr. Hughes a back number. . . . Everything is serene and prosperous, except a few minor disturbing issues. —*Collier's Weekly.*

WHAT MARIE OWES TO TAMMANY

Let us be sane and sensible and sincere with ourselves. If it were not for the organization most of us would not be adorned with titles, and I never would have ridden up Fifth Avenue with Queen Marie.

—*Mayor Walker.*

THE LINE FORMS ON THE RIGHT

The Rev. John Roach Straton, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, declared yesterday that if ever he was elected President his first official act would be to cast Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler into jail. And on the heels of Dr. Butler Dr. Straton would thrust the faculty of Columbia and the faculty of Union Theological Seminary and "all other teachers of sensualism and Bolshevism."

—*New York Herald-Tribune.*

NO HOPE FOR CHINA

Nothing short of a great international war, with all the Powers taking part, would resolve the situation in China and make it entirely safe for the foreigner, in the opinion of Harry A. Franck. Mr. Franck said today that the only trouble with this solution was that it was impossible. . . .

—*New York Evening Post.*

HOW TO ANSWER CRITICISM

Our public is inclined to consider altogether too seriously the reports that we are criticized abroad. We never had a larger foreign trade than at the present time.

—*Calvin Coolidge.*

THE ADVANTAGE OF HEREDITY TO THE HUMBLE

In Professor Raymond Pearl's discussion of "Differential Fertility" some dispassionate conclusions emerged, not the least interesting being that, although heredity plays the chief part in giving the world its geniuses, there will come in the future as in the past Shakespeares and Lincolns from humble origins, owing to the infinite possibilities of germplasm combinations.

—*Science.*

DARK DAYS AT CORNELL

Football is utterly hopeless here. Other schools get football players, boys born and bred in the game, who come to the college with prep school reputations. Here all we have are students —*Gil Dobie, coach.*

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A Number of Things

Life in the Hackensack Meadows

As the passenger emerges from the Pennsylvania tunnel, and the steep dyke of Jersey City slips away behind him, the prairie stretches of the Hackensack Meadows are interrupted by two sudden and inexplicable hillocks, one on either side of the railroad's causeway. At the base of the larger one, on the right, a home for inebriates extends its hideous brick façade, and in the near foreground appears its crowded graveyard, where two old men are patiently hollowing out another shallow tomb. As the passenger's eye wanders over the horizon in a vain attempt to find some painless resting-place, he may, if he is lucky and it is nightfall, catch the silhouette of Newark's skyline against the sunset. Or if it is well after dark, he may defiantly discover a beauty in the shrouded factories and scattered lights on the black water-front. But in the daytime he can hardly escape the village of pigstyes; if it is summer, and the car-windows are open, the stink of it will wake him from his nap. The tatterdemalion shanties and pigpens sprawl over several acres of muck, right up to the edge of the railroad: the hordes of crowded pigs are the only living beings in evidence, but though he may find it hard to believe, he will see unmistakable signs of human habitation in some of the cabins. On the crazy wall of one of these huts, in bold but grimy letters, he may be startled to observe this sign, surely one of the happiest strokes of the God of Advertising:

They Walk. They Talk. They Sleep.

It is the description of a super-doll manufactured in these parts.

Broadway

To one who has never seen Broadway on the stage, the published version (Doran) reads extremely well. The play is supposed to be the product of collaboration between George Abbott and Philip Dunning; but the text has an evenness and sureness which suggest that, though the plot may have been evolved in conference, the dialogue is the work of one hand. From the literary point of view, indeed, Broadway has a certain distinction. It is written entirely in New York slang, but the language is given a peculiar color and flavor, and there is no attempt to concoct gags merely for the purpose of getting laughs: the wise-cracks are a natural emanation from the situations and the characters. And each of the characters has his own peculiar vein, very well sustained. The cabaret girls are wonderful; the song and dance man is almost as good as a creation by Ring Lardner; and even the heroine, as she appears in the text, very plausible and lifelike, quite free from sentimentality, a little like a younger Lorelei Lee, acting in good faith. One even feels that, with such an eye for character and such a turn for dialogue, the author might have turned out a serious play almost as easily as a melodrama. A melodrama, however, Broadway remains: the villain is shot by a spirited girl with a just grievance against him; and the hero, though a comic hero, wins the virtuous heroine. With the materials at their disposal, the authors might perhaps have produced a vividly colored nightmare, like Wedekind's Lulu; but the authors have aimed at nothing more pretentious than a sure-fire theatrical success and have engineered all their action with familiar machinery. One had a somewhat similar impression in connection with The Shanghai Gesture, which displayed a considerable amount of imagination and some literary ability. One thinks sadly, in the case of melodramas like these, of all our dreary and sterile expressionistic plays, with their desperate effort, by machinery and noise, to make a contact with vulgar American life. What they are obliged to strain for is precisely what the authors of Broadway and of The Shanghai Gesture have in abundance at their command. Mr. T. S. Eliot is publishing in the Criterion a hard-boiled drama in verse called Wanna Go Home, Baby? It is written in a vernacular—part English and part American—which Mr. Eliot appears to have acquired in somewhat the same fashion as Sanskrit or Provençal. The songs which he invents for his characters are echoes of American rag-time of the vintage of nearly twenty years ago. With the resources of the authors of Broadway, what might not one of our real poets achieve?

The Ziegfeld Theatre

The new Ziegfeld Theatre is a curious affair, quite unlike anything else in New York. The interior is oval and, after the green peacocks and gold panels, the luxurious haze of the New Amsterdam, seems a little smooth and bare: the proscenium arch is a dull smooth gilt, with rather broad columnar ruchings on both sides; the ceiling and the convex walls have been decorated by Joseph Urban with a continuous darkish green-and-purple mural, glittering darkly with gilt dandelion-leaf tinsel and animated by mysterious, slender and Wagnerian male figures attended by gamboling gazelles. The entertainment itself is a musical comedy of rather a mechanical and commonplace sort. The only distinguished performer among its principals is Miss Ada May, who is a very engaging dancer and has a seductive nasal whining voice. Mr. Ziegfeld appears to have scanted himself in a fashion unusual with him by allowing the chorus to reappear repeatedly in the same costumes; but this doesn't matter, as both costumes and dancing are up to the best Ziegfeld standard. The Albertina Rasch Dancers and the ensemble—with, among these last, the wonderful Ziegfeld Americanization of the German energy and beauty of Elsie Behrens—by themselves make Rio Rita worth seeing. The real inauguration of the new theatre will, however, one hopes, take place in the spring with a new 1927 Follies.

A Sophisticated Mephistopheles

The following letter has been received by a regular contributor to this magazine. The readers of the New Republic are invited to guess to which of its writers it is addressed. To the first person sending in the correct an-

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swer, we offer a prize consisting of an appropriate selection from the new books of the season.

O You Adorable Man!

I have just finished snickering over [a recent article in the New Republic], and I send this belated appreciation. You see, my friend in Sonora, California, has just sent me a stack of the beloved New Republics.

I think probably the best part of [the article] is that I can see you now. Every article I have read of yours I have thought, "I should like to see him." As I read —— I saw you clearly. You are dark, with a sardonic twist to your countenance; not very tall; nervous; your wife acts like poor Alice Ben Bolt, when you approach the house; you wear a drooping moustache (Why do you do it?); you are scornful of all women; you have very presentable hands, good nails, well shaped, but your hands are seldom in repose (Such hands frighten me more than a facial expression); you are Hamlet, with the power to act, which he had not, and you would just as soon commit a murder any morning as shave, if it seemed worth while to you, which it doesn't; you sit like God, judging the world—I am dreadfully afraid of you, though you fascinate me; your tastes in every direction are impeccable, yet you are scornful of those who make pretension to taste, as you are of those who have none—no, not quite, for you can forgive anything but assumption of superiority; you might kick the cat, but would like a good dog; you would make a wonderful lover, and a detestable husband. . . .

Oh, well, perhaps I shall burn this after all. Now I am going hunting through the rest of the New Republics for something else by that sophisticated Mephistopheles —— long may he wave! (Oh, yes! you have indigestion, too.)

In Abraham's Bosom

In Abraham's Bosom, by Paul Green. Garrick Theatre, February 13, 1927.

THE play now presented at the Garrick Theatre by the Provincetown Playhouse has for its theme a blend of aspiration, suffering, poignant futility and confusion. Its problem concerns the groping and defeated effort toward race freedom, growth and opportunity; and its material is full of pain, deep humanity and inherent drama. The figure who is to carry the main thread of this theme is a man half-white, half-black, troubled by white nerves and impulses, darkened in his soul with superstition, weakness and disease. He is Abraham McCranie, the son of Colonel McCranie and a colored woman, and the plot is a record of his story.

We see three Negroes in a wood where they have been chopping. They talk of Abe, the book-lover. Abe enters; he is apart from them, absorbed in his dream of an education and the salvation of his race. Goldie McAllister, also partly white, loves him, brings him food; and now, when Abe has been impudent to the son of his white father and struck him, and the father has given Abe a whipping, Goldie comforts him. The scene ends with their going to sit beneath the trees and the three other Negroes breaking into an orgy of excitement over this picture of love.

We see Abe then, after he has been married for a few years, the father of two puny children who have died and now of a son that is to be strong and the savior of his race. Fortune has deserted Abe, his crops are ruined, his spirit bitter, his family starving; for he is no farmer, what he wants is to teach a school. The Colonel comes and gives him the title to some land. Abe's bitterness changes; he sees the heavens open, sees himself as blest and on the road to his mission. We find him then in his school, a wretched sight, and then closing the school because of the attack to be made on him for cruelly beating one of his pupils who would not try to learn. He moves from town to town, talking his salvation theme and losing his jobs, hounded, sick, bewildered, brutal, fanatic, his weak and trifling son turned from the house, Muh Mack, the aunt who lives with him, scolding and complaining, only his wife faithful and slaving and starving for him, never losing her belief. Colonel McCranie's will has ordered that a place be always given him on the farm if he should wish to return. He goes back, his crop is again neglected, the cotton falls out of the bolls while he writes a speech for the inauguration of a new academy that shall be a light to his people. His son sets a low class of whites on him, he is hounded from the hall where he meant to speak. In the fields he lies, his pursuers outrun. Mr. Lonnie, the Colonel's son, comes to find out what the noise is. He tries to steady Abe, but when he tells him that he has taken his crop and found pickers to get it in, Abe leaps at him, there is a scuffle, the white man is killed. In the last scene, Abe bursts in on his family, his pursuers arrive, as he opens the door he is shot down, his last cry is freedom, freedom. The curtain falls on his wife sobbing over him.

As I ponder this play it seems moving and profound. Certainly the course of its struggle is full of tragic despair, this poor, confused, high-souled creature beating out his life in vain against circumstance. There is, too, a certain wise balance of parts in the dramatic elements; the white people mean to be kind, but they are as lost in the midst of a race situation as the Negro is; they are moved now by human or affectionate impulse and now by a blind racial instinct and an arbitrary, desperate sense of self-preservation. The climaxes in the play are strong and bold. I seem, as I think of it, to have been present at a full, passionate story, told by a poet. Certainly this material that Mr. Green attempts is ambitious of power and devastation and beauty; we are in deep waters with such subject matter as he employs.

But what I remember is that for three-fifths of the time I was dissatisfied and often more than bored. The first act, up to that really inventive moment at the very last when the three Negroes dance about at the sight of the love between Abe and Goldie, was very nearly unbearable. With better acting, perhaps the play might have been better. Of what acting there was, we may say that for more or less untrained actors, with little sense of technical projection, the company was perhaps passable; Miss Rose McClendon was, by virtue of a certain sincerity or some-

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thing in herself, nearly always effective and often tragic.

The dialogue of this play, apart from some of the curtain climaxes, is flat and seems hastily written. Considering the bold, O'Neill sort of line that the treatment essays, the speeches are sometimes surprisingly false, borrowed, conventional. One of the best signs of promise in such a play as In Abraham's Bosom would lie in the ear; for nowhere in America is there better material for dialogue than in this world of Mr. Green's; nowhere is there a more special rhythm and flavor of speech than in the South, or more warmth and naïveté of words than in Negro speech. That Mr. Green made so little of this living stuff, that his lines have so little care and so little passion for the quivering beat of life that the words might carry, is a discouraging sign in what is obviously a marked theatre talent working with material that is wholly vibrant and freshly taken out of our American life.

The best places in this play of Negro life are those like that orgiastic end of the first act; or the scenes where the loose and worthless grandson with his jazz talent sings for his old aunt and the two of them have one blood in their veins; or Abe's prayer when the land becomes his and he dedicates his baby to God and his race. In these there is an essence that is racial, dramatic and moving. These moments take themselves out of the hands of the actors, the pulse quickens, the glow of strangeness and beauty comes over the scene; and for a little we have the sense of a soul working and of poetic truth.

But it is between these moments that the trouble lies with Mr. Green's play. Between these high moments we cannot ask an equal tension and imagination. But we can ask more pains, more reduction of the play's progress to firm outlines that would go better with its bold technical aim. The tenderness of feeling in this work, the love of the country and soil in which this history occurs, the courage of delineation and the range of sentiment, all deserve more care and choice on the author's part. The glow that is in these special passages could appear, though in smaller terms of course, in the speeches that lie between them. This play is of the kind that makes you wish it well; and you resent all the more the fact that the gloom that some of it spreads over you is not the gloom of tragedy, for that might be rich and stirring, but of casual form and bad writing.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

An Apology for Fascism

SIR: As an exponent of liberal principles you are sometimes amazing, but never more so than in your article entitled An Apology for Fascism. With Mr. Kallen's article in the same issue I am unconcerned. It is an individual expression of opinion, but when you print an unsigned editorial in the same strain it raises acutely the question, What do you really stand for?

I understand your argument as follows. Italy has enjoyed only a half-century of self-government. Its self-government has been relatively inefficient and has not really united Italy. (By the way, perhaps you could tell us what *kind* of unity you think, on liberal principles, to be desirable.) Hence it may be a good thing for Italy that it should be subjected for a while to a kind of inverted sovietism under which all parties but the N. F. P. are forcibly suppressed, in which all spokesmen of liberal opinions are beaten or imprisoned or exiled or at the least terrorized into silence, in which the more blatant type of militaristic patriotism is encouraged, and in which the state gradually extends its tyrannical control over nearly every manifestation of the national life.

There are some strange assumptions in this argument. The first is that by these untoward means unity is actually attained. In fact, you speak as if it were even now achieved. "The Italian nation, among others, is fully entitled to select its own route." No liberal would of course dream of applying to Italy the foolish and fatal interventionism which was attempted toward Russia, when it was driven along a similar road. But to imagine that Italy is united by internal tyranny implies not only a failure to understand human nature but also an ignorance of the facts. A pro-Fascist, particularly well informed, told me in Rome this past summer that on the best estimate about one-half of the Italian people were then in favor of Fascism. And there is certainly in the more prosperous industrial provinces of Piedmont and Lombardy a deep undercurrent of exasperated but silent resentment—silent, so far as public utterance goes.

Economic reforms are not the core of Fascism, nor have they really been achieved by Fascist methods, unless perhaps you are prepared to call the suppression of the right to strike an economic reform. The gist of Fascism is a political, not an economic, system, and politically its chief weapon is sheer suppression. How, then, can you call it "a gesture which bespeaks authority, mastery, *and self-control*"? Needless to say, the italics are mine.

R. M. MACIVER.

Toronto, Canada.

Railroad Propaganda

SIR: In your issue of January 19, you say that this Committee "is consistently attempting to mislead the public in its announcement of railroad earnings." The joker, you say, lies in our use of the property investment account to determine our rate of return. Not to mention the so-called Interstate Commerce Commission valuation used in ex parte 74 which you say is misleading, and the avoidance of whose use you call propaganda.

The figure of $18,900,000,000 used by the Commission as a rate base in 1920 was simply a minimum tentative estimate of a figure below which no finding of value could possibly go. It was not a valuation in any proper sense of the word. The Interstate Commerce Commission itself apparently recognizes this fact. On page 2 of its 1926 Annual Report it says:

> We are without an authoritative fair property value with which to compare the net railway operating income.

And it will be some years before there is such an authoritative fair property value. Meanwhile, it is a matter of public record that in its valuations the Commission has not been applying many important decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States on what constitutes fair value. This was admitted by the examiner-attorney for the Bureau of Valuation in the hearing before the whole Commission on July 1 and 2, 1926. Since that time—in the Indianapolis Water Company case—the Supreme Court has still more vigorously affirmed these previous decisions. The Commission's first two important valuations of specific Class I railroads for rate-making purposes have been unanimously enjoined by the U. S. courts. Hence, there can be little doubt that the Commission's 1920 estimate of value will have to be revised substantially upward.

During all the years which this process may take, to relate railroad earnings to the hasty estimate used by the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1920 would not only be a grotesque injustice; it would be truly misleading, because it could result only in constantly overstating the rate of return being earned by the railroads on the fair value of their property.

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In the absence of an authoritative determination of that value, we relate current earnings to the only currently ascertainable basis; namely, the property investment account. This is not, as you state, "the book value which the railroads place upon themselves." It is a mere record of investment. It is the aggregate of all the entries made in the various capital accounts prescribed in railroad accounting, plus working capital and materials and supplies on hand. Since 1907 these entries have been pursuant to law and under the regulation of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Nearly half of railroad investment has been made under these conditions.

But since the bulk of railroad property was acquired prior to the rise of prices due to the Great War, it is impossible that the present value of this property should not substantially exceed this investment. Hence, if there be any unfairness in its use, that unfairness is to the railroad investor, the present value of whose investment is still understated by the property investment account.

ROBERT S. BINKERD,
Vice-Chairman, Committee on Public Relations of the Eastern Railroads.

New York City.

[Mr. Binkerd is in error on the following matters: 1. The tentative valuation of 1920 used by the Commission as a rate base was not a minimum figure, but was an estimate of the fair valuation. It was rechecked and reaffirmed at the time of the rate reduction of 1922. Naturally the Commission recognized that it was not final, but the law has required it to establish a tentative figure as a rate base pending the final determination. For the railroads not to mention this figure in calculating their current rate of return is misleading, for it is smaller than their book value. 2. The Commission never has admitted that it has not been guided by Supreme Court decisions in final valuations, but on the contrary has done its best to comply with them. This is not an easy matter, since the decisions appear to be inconsistent with each other in the relative weights they give to such items as reproduction cost and original cost. 3. The injunctions issued against the two final valuations of Class I railroads were by lower federal courts and did not turn on issues predominant in the Indianapolis Water case, but on other issues, some of them procedural in character. 4. The capital accounts of the railroads comprised in large part, prior to 1907, such amounts as were necessary to balance the liabilities in the shape of stock and bonds. They were often inflated. Commissioner Hall stated in a Congressional Committee hearing in 1920 that since 1907, when railroad accounts became subject to the Commission's regulations, there had not been enough men to police the accounts adequately, and cases had been discovered where investment accounts had been "plugged." There is no doubt that the railroads' book value represents considerably more than the dollars actually invested, and is not "a mere record of investment." 5. Whether or how much, the "present value" of the railroads exceeds the original cost of their investment is one of the chief points of controversy in the whole dispute. Here, as elsewhere, Mr. Binkerd assumes that reproduction cost will prevail as the basis of value, and that is one of the assumptions to which we object. The fact remains that the manner of calculating their rate of return adopted in their publicity by the Eastern railroads understates the return on the money actually put into the roads by investors, as well as the return on the tentative valuation by the Commission.—THE EDITORS.]

The Brooks-Bryce Foundation

SIR: "To what extent do the ramifications of international trade and commerce affect the political relations between the United States of America and the British Commonwealth of Nations?" This is the title recently announced by the Brooks-Bryce Foundation of New York City for its essay contest in 1927.

Membership in The Brooks-Bryce Foundation is limited to secondary schools whose pupils range from fourteen to twenty years of age inclusive. Annual awards are given to the boy or girl in each member-school for the best essay on Anglo-American friendship. The winning essay in each school is sent to the Foundation to be entered in the interscholastic contest.

The prize-winning essays in the interscholastic contest are rewarded with suitable prizes. The author of the essay awarded the first prize receives a return-trip ticket to England and a personal letter of credit for one hundred pounds sterling.

Those interested should address the Foundation at 19 West Thirty-first Street, New York City.

JOHN E. J. FANSHAWE.

New York City.

The Paramount Building

SIR: I was talking the other day with a friend about an office building, which my friend is just completing, and I suggested to him that if he wanted to see a perfectly beautiful office building, he should see the Paramount Building in New York at night, in a fog, with the great bulk of its base rising majestically out of the blaze and the din of Broadway, and the top of its mountain peak, barely discernible through the metropolitan night fog. Between the base of the mountain and its peak rises tier after tier of terraces, one on the other, each disappearing a little more than the one beneath it into the misty haze. The flood lights on each level seem to bring out less and less the outlines of the terraces, and to make each terrace, as one's gaze rises higher and higher, seem a little more ethereal than the one below, until the fog-enshrouded peak can barely be seen, as it is occasionally outlined by the brilliant lights below it.

My friend seemed to be quite impressed with my poetical outburst describing the beauty of the Paramount Building, particularly as he apparently considers me a prosaic sort of a person, and not liable to that sort of thing. He said that I ought to read an article in the New Republic about the Paramount Building to see how somebody else felt about it. That night when I got home, I picked up the December 22 number, and after reading the Washington Notes (of course no one reads anything in the New Republic until after reading the Washington Notes), I read Lewis Mumford's Magnified Impotence about my beautiful Paramount Building.

As I read the article I wondered why Mr. Mumford had examined the building so carefully, and spent so much time around and in it, when he disliked it so much. . . .

I don't quite see why Mr. Mumford doesn't like the Paramount Building. He suggests that the majority of us common people will like it as soon as we see it. I don't know him and so cannot know what there is particularly about him that prevents his being of the common herd. Of course, naturally, the owners of the Paramount Building built it for the common herd. They didn't build it for blind people to see, and they didn't build it for those who are mentally blind to the beauties which it possesses. It would be truly unfortunate to construct a building or paint a picture for the one person in a million and have the other 999,999 dislike it as Mr. Mumford does the Paramount Building.

I wish Mr. Mumford would stroll down or up town—probably he would have to stroll up town, (I suspect that he lives below Fifteenth Street), and see the Paramount Building on a foggy night. I think he would honestly like it, and I think he would like it so much that the fact that he was prejudiced against it after looking at it in the bright sunlight, would not prevent him from admitting it. Of course he can say that the Paramount Building was not built to be looked at in the fog only and has to be looked at in the bright sunlight as well as in the fog, but if he is going to take the trouble to write about it, why not write about the beautiful things about it, just the way we like to pick out the beautiful things and nice things in people, and not to think and speak only about the unpleasant things and qualities which all of us possess.

FARLEY GANNETT.

New York City.

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George Gissing

The Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family. Collected and arranged by Algernon and Ellen Gissing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 414 pages. $6.

DO you know there are men in London who go the round of the streets selling paraffin oil?" wrote George Gissing in the year 1880, and the phrase calls up a world of fog and four-wheelers and horse omnibuses, of link-boys with flares, of slatternly landladies, of struggling men of letters, of gnawing domestic misery, of gloomy back streets and ignoble yellow chapels above which, distant but distinct, as on a clear day one may see some tree-crowned height beyond the city, rise the columns of the Parthenon and the hills of Rome. For Gissing is one of those writers of stubborn individuality whose chance phrases have power to bring them back to us. He has a world of his own, and yet it is not our world; it remains his world. He is one of those imperfect writers with whom we establish a personal rather than an artistic relationship. Their books are half-transparent; while we read them we are looking at a face, so that now, taking up Gissing's letters, we feel that we are filling in a design which we began to trace out when we read Demos and New Grub Street and The Nether World.

Yet here, too, there are gaps in plenty, dark places left unillumined. Much information has been kept back, many facts necessarily omitted. The Gissings were poor, and their father died when they were children, and there were many of them, and they had to scrape together what education they could. George, his sister said, had a passion for learning. He would rush off to school with a sharp herring bone in his throat for fear of missing his lesson. He would copy out from a little book, called That's It, the astonishing number of eggs that the tench lays, "because I think it a fact worthy of attention." She remembers his "overwhelming veneration" for intellect, and how patiently this tall boy with the high white forehead and the short-sighted eyes would sit beside her and help her with her Latin, "giving the same explanation time after time without the least sign of impatience."

Partly because he so reverenced facts and had no faculty, it seems (his language is meagre and unmetaphorical), for impressions, one wonders whether, since he had to make his living and was married unfortunately by the time he was twenty, his choice of a novelist's career was a happy one. There was the whole world with its history and its literature inviting him to haul it into his mind, to give it shape and coherency, and he must sit down in hired rooms and spin novels about "earnest young people striving for improvement in, as it were, the dawn of a new phase of our civilization."

But the art of fiction is infinitely accommodating, and it was quite ready, about the year 1880, to accept into its ranks a writer who wished to be the mouthpiece of the "advanced Radical party," who was determined to show in his novels the ghastly condition of the poor, and the hideous injustice of society. The art of fiction was acquiescent; such novels, that is to say, might be written, but it was doubtful if such novels would be read. Smith Elder's reader summed up the situation tersely. Mr. Gissing's novel, he wrote, "is too painful to please the ordinary novel reader, and treats of scenes that can never attract the subscribers to Mr. Mudie's library." So, dining off lentils and hearing the men cry paraffin for sale in the streets of Islington, Gissing paid for the publication himself. It was then that he formed the habit of getting up at five in the morning, in order to tramp half across London and coach Mr. M. before breakfast. Often enough Mr. M. sent down word that he was already engaged. Gissing had to tramp back half across London again, and another page was added to the dismal chronicle of life in modern Grub Street. And here we run against one of those problems with which literature is sown so thick. The writer has dined upon lentils; he gets up at five; he walks half across London; he finds M. still in bed, whereupon he stands forth as the champion of life as it is, and proclaims that ugliness is truth, truth ugliness, and that is all we know and all we need to know. But there are signs that the novel resents such treatment. To use a burning consciousness of one's own misery and of the shackles that cut one's own limbs to quicken one's sense of life in general, as Dickens did, to turn and twist out of the murk some resplendent figure, such as Micawber or Mrs. Gamp, is admirable; but to use suffering to fetter the reader's sympathy and curiosity upon your own individual case is harmful. Imagination is at its freest when it is most generalized; it loses something of its sweep and power when it is riveted to the consideration of a particular case calling for sympathy.

At the same time, sympathy is a passion of great intensity; it makes the pages fly; it lends what has perhaps little merit artistically another and momentarily a keener edge. Biffen and Reardon had, we say to ourselves, bread and butter and sardines for supper; so had Gissing; Reardon could not write on Sunday; no more could Gissing. We forget whether it was Reardon who loved cats or Gissing who loved barrel organs. Certainly both Reardon and Gissing bought their Gibbons at a second-hand book stall and lugged the volumes home one by one through the fog. So we go on capping these resemblances, and each time we succeed, dipping now into the novel, now into the letters, a little glow of satisfaction comes over us, as if novel reading were a game of skill in which the puzzle is to find the face of the writer.

We know Gissing thus as we do not know Hardy or George Eliot. Where the great novelist flows in and out of his characters and bathes them in an element which seems to be common to us all and not to himself alone, Gissing remains solitary, self-centred, apart. His is one of those sharp lights beyond whose edges all is vapor and phantom. But mixed with this sharp light is one ray of singular penetration. With all his narrowness of outlook and meagreness of sensibility, Gissing is one of the extremely rare novelists who believes in the mind, who makes his people think. They are thus differently poised from the majority of fictitious men and women. The awful hierarchy of the passions is slightly displaced. Social snobbery does not exist; money is desired almost entirely to buy bread and butter; love itself takes a second place.

But the brain works and that alone is enough to give us a sense of freedom. For to think is to become complex; it is to overflow boundaries, to cease to be a "character," to merge one's private life in the life of politics or art or ideas, to have relationships based on them partly and not on sexual desire alone. The impersonal side of life is given its place in the scheme. "Why don't people write about the really important things of life?" Gissing makes one of his characters exclaim, and at the unexpected cry the horrid burden of fiction begins to slip from the shoulders. Is it possible that we are going to talk of other things besides falling in love, important though that is, and trying to dine with duchesses, fascinating though that is? Here in

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Gissing is a gleam of recognition that Darwin had lived, that the telegraph had been invented, that people read books, that friendship exists, that once upon a time there was such a place as Greece. It is this that makes his books such painful reading that they can never "attract the subscribers to Mr. Mudie's library." They owe their peculiar grimness to the fact that the people who suffer most are capable of making their suffering part of a reasoned view of life. The thought endures when the feeling has gone. Their unhappiness represents something more lasting than a personal reverse; it becomes part of a view of life. Hence, when we have finished one of Gissing's novels, what we have taken away is not a character nor an incident, but a comment upon life.

Like his characters, Gissing commented upon life, and because he was always thinking, he was always changing. In that perpetual change, that incessant comment, lies much of his interest for us. As a young man he had thought that he would write books to show up the "hideous injustice of our whole system of society." Later, his views changed; either it was not possible, or other tastes tugged him in a different direction. He came to think, as he believed, finally, that "the only thing known to us of absolute value is artistic perfection . . . the works of the artist . . . remain sources of health to the world." So that if one wishes to better the world, one must, paradoxically enough, withdraw from it and spend more and more time fashioning one's sentences into perfection. For writing, in Gissing's view, was a difficult art. At the end of his life he thought that he might perhaps be able "to manage a page that is decently grammatical and fairly harmonious." Certainly, passages in his books stand out like stone slabs, shaped and solid, among the untidy litter of prose fiction. For example, he is describing a cemetery in the East End of London: "Here on the waste limits of that dread east, to wander among tombs is to go hand in hand with the stark and eyeless emblems of mortality; the spirit fails beneath the cold burden of ignoble destiny. Here lie those who were born for toil; who, when toil has worn them to the uttermost, have but to yield their useless breath and pass into oblivion. For them is no day, only the brief twilight of a winter's sky between the former and the latter night. For them no aspiration; for them no hope of memory in the dust; their very children are wearied into forgetfulness. Indistinguishable units in the vast throng that labors but to support life, the name of each, father, mother, child, is but a dumb cry for the warmth and love of which fate so stinted them. The wind wails above their narrow tenements; the sandy soil, soaking in the rain as soon as it has fallen, is a symbol of the great world which absorbs their toil and straightway blots their being."

For he never ceased to educate himself. While the Baker Street trains hissed their steam beneath his windows, and the lodger downstairs blew the room out, and the landlady was disobliging, and the grocer refused to send the sugar, so that he had to fetch it himself, and the fog burnt his throat and he caught cold and vacillated weakly from one domestic disaster to another in one dreary lodging after another—while all this went on with a dismal monotony which caused him to reflect bitterly upon the weakness of his own character, he still doggedly went on learning. The columns of the Parthenon and the hills of Rome still rose above the fogs and fried-fish shops of the Euston Road. At last he actually set foot in Athens; he saw Rome, he read his Thucydides in Sicily, before he died. His comment upon life was always changing. Perhaps the old sordid reality was not the only reality; the past with its leisure and its literature and its civilization were equally real. His books were in future to be about Rome in the time of Totila and not Islington in the time of Queen Victoria. But he could only mark down the spot he had reached and the conclusions he saw before him, when death—the same death he had given to Edwin Reardon—came upon him and he died, saying to the friend who stood by his side: Patience, patience. That comment was his last.

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

Civilization and the Cortex

Brains of Rats and Men, by C. Judson Herrick. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 382 pages. $3.

Fatalism or Freedom, by C. Judson Herrick. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 96 pages. $1.

THE function of science is to substitute mechanisms for mysteries, to discover causes for events which seem fortuitous. The task, one feels certain, will never be completed, since each explained mechanism plunges us into deeper mysteries, or, at least, raises speculation to higher levels. This is perhaps best illustrated by the careers of scientists: they begin by asking specific questions about concrete things, such as, for example, the brain, and they end by speculating about the nature of freedom. Professor Herrick demonstrates this thesis with his two current volumes; he, of course, still discounts philosophy and philosophers; indeed, he occasionally says harsh things about both—which is probably sufficient reason for believing that he is now engaged in philosophizing. And when scientists of Professor Herrick's calibre begin to philosophize—so much the better for philosophy and perhaps for science as well.

The particular brains about which scientists know most are those of rats and men—hence the title of Professor Herrick's volume. If there is any real distinction between rats and men as behaving organisms, its centre is predominantly in the size, structure and functioning of that "master-tissue" of the body, the cerebral cortex. One-half the total weight of the brain is composed of cortical cells and this half dominates and controls the remainder of the brain and the body as a whole. Numerically considered, these cells and their potential interneuronic connections overwhelm mathematical imagination. The number of atoms in a cubic centimetre of water may be represented by the figure 10^{24}; the number of atoms in the solar system by 10^{56}; the number of cells in the human body by (2.65×10^{13}); the number of nerve cells or neurons in the brain is estimated at (12×10^{9}) and of these 9,200,000,000 are in the cortex. "If a million cortical nerve cells were connected one with another in groups of only two neurons each in all possible combinations, the number of different patterns of interneuronic connections thus provided would be expressed by $10^{2,783,000}$." And these are the cells which determine whether a particular reflex is to have its way or not, these are the "deciders" of our behavior. "The efficiency of the cortex, what practical use we can make of these potential intercellular associational connections, seems to depend in the first place upon the number and character of the associational patterns that are laid down as enduring structural records of past experience (that is, the number and character of our memory vestiges—what we have learned), and in the second place upon the facility with which these memory patterns can be reactivated in useful combinations (that is, the extent to which knowledge previously acquired can be fitted into new situations)." In this respect we humans excel the rats, and consequently we have

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created a cultural inheritance, through the use of foresight and means of symbolic communication. Our civilization rests upon the cortex.

What Professor Herrick has to say about the cortex and its modus operandi does not constitute holiday reading; no one should read this book unless he is prepared to have his higher associational centres thoroughly activated. Those who are thus prepared, and, in addition, are ready to have some new connections made, will find themselves richly repaid for the effort. In fact, it is the sort of book one wants to read again and again, always being assured of fresh discoveries. The language used is simple enough, but the ideas and facts for which Professor Herrick's words stand as symbols are weighted with the kind of significance which demands study.

Professor Herrick is on the trail of an hypothesis of behavior which is inclusive and explainable in naturalistic terms. "The evidence," he writes, "that mind is a function of brain (mind in the ordinary sense in which we use the term in science and in common life) is of exactly the same sort as the evidence that, in birds, flight is a function of wings, and to an unprejudiced observer it is quite as convincing." This is the unifying assumption which guides his work in the laboratory as well as his consequent inductions. The scientist who accepts this postulate—the only one suitable for the present capacities of scientific method—must defend a mechanistic concept of organismic functions. Professor Herrick's naturalism leads toward behaviorism in psychology and his desire for inclusiveness leads toward psychoanalysis. In the end he rejects both: behaviorism, because of its limited and narrow use of science, and psychoanalysis, because of its mysticism. He is interested, for example, in the subconscious, and indeed has written a full chapter on this subject, but has not time for "the mythological gnomes of the Freudian system—'complexes,' 'censors,' or other fabulous monsters without legitimate parentage or scientifically demonstrable nature." On the other hand, he believes that the intrinsic processes within the human cortex go beyond the simple stimulus-response formula. Introspection and the fact of individual experience must somehow be brought within the ambit of a thoroughly scientific conception of behavior. Consciousness and experience are realities which can neither be denied nor left to the metaphysicians. "If we rule out of science everything but the easy tasks for which we already have suitable technical methods, science will not make much more progress."

That a biologist holding beliefs as indicated above would sooner or later apply himself to such definitely philosophical problems as the nature of freedom and determinism and their rôles in human conduct, was to be expected. Professor Herrick chooses his own definition of determinism; it is a mechanistic interpretation, but does not imply predeterminism or preformation; progressive determin*ing* is the essence of its meaning. Living, or the vital process, is "interaction between a protoplasmic organization and the energies of an appropriate environment." Thinking, being a function of the protoplasmic organization, is integral to this interacting process which is behavior. Thoughts, emotions and volitions are causative factors in human conduct, and this causal feature of mind or consciousness permits man to live a life in which choice counts for something. We are, in other words, free within and relative to the realm of nature and not otherwise. Natural freedom is a reality; mystical freedom is a delusion. "Common and scientific experience provide a natural frame within which feeling, thinking willing, purpose, self-culture, moral sanctions, choice, freedom, faith, hope and charity find their places, all in orderly patterns of determined and determining cause-and-effect processes." We human beings play our parts in "creative evolution." The distinction between man's freedom and the freedom afforded other natural objects is to be explained solely on the basis of the immeasurable differences in man's inner nature.

The present reviewer is not qualified to appraise Professor Herrick's technical material. There are conclusions which, on purely logical grounds, seem to go beyond the objective experimental evidence, but these are scarce. The chapter entitled How Do Rats Learn? is an example of brilliant analysis and synthesis, and that on biological control, in the smaller volume, represents a high standard of popular scientific writing. When Professor Herrick writes as a biologist, that is, with his laboratory evidence before his eyes, he is convincing, profound and clear; when his vision soars off to the horizon of human perplexities, when he drifts into the philosophic mood, he often becomes merely optimistic and traditional. Most of the metaphysical enemies which he so valiantly attacks are nothing more than sand-men apparently erected for that very purpose; and when the ghost of Bergson's creative evolution is substituted in their places, one realizes how bloodless the battle really was. But these are minor criticisms, prompted in large measure, probably, by the reviewer's desire to make his enthusiasm seem reasonable. Professor Herrick has written a notable book, from the biological point of view, and his excursion into the field of philosophy is an event of importance.

EDUARD C. LINDEMAN.

The Death of an Old World

Anatole France: The Degeneration of a Great Artist, by Barry Cerf. New York: Lincoln MacVeagh. The Dial Press. 303 pages. $4.

Rambles With Anatole France, by Sándor Kémeri (Mme. Georges Bölöni) translated from the Hungarian by Emil Lengyel. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 335 pages. $5.

PROFESSOR Cerf's Anatole France, The Degeneration of a Great Artist, is evidently intended to be the first complete study of France. The machinery of scholarship gives the book an impressive air, but its three hundred repetitious pages can be condensed into one sentence: Anatole France was a cynical dilettante, who, by toying with life and thought, has "tainted the mental and moral being of those who took his sermons to heart." It is to be hoped that the reading public will not confuse the motive of judgment in such a plan with the spirit of free inquiry which distinguishes the critical mind. The latter seeks to understand and elucidate.

Anatole France belonged intellectually to a century which had been taught to think in terms of the old political and ethical "sciences"; while it was itself beginning the first serious accumulation of data which was eventually to discredit the old thought forms. It was inevitable that the period should end in an unsolvable antinomy. France, whose mind was retentive rather than original, gave form to both points of view; and by elaborating both side by side until their irreconcilable nature was obvious to all, reduced the traditional thinking to an absurdity. It was a natural illusion for him to think that he had reduced life itself to an absurdity. Out of this collapse nothing could come but intellectual nihilism and a reliance

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on the senses, which alone could not be dissolved by logic. A genuine criticism would analyze the components of that nihilism, and in doing so would throw considerable light on the radical change which is at present coming over our method of approaching the problems of the mind. Essentially we are shifting from thinking based on ideals to thinking based on observation. Whether we relish it or not, the natural sciences will supply the criterion of twentieth-century thought. But this change was not possible until the older approaches had been discredited, and Anatole France, in his skull cap and dressing gown, the dilettante of all the old systems, blowing each one out like a soap bubble until it burst, can be seen to have been an agent in that discrediting. Since he saw no other kind of soap bubble to make, the conclusion of his thinking was the futility of thought. It is this that outrages Professor Cerf.

In his section, The Thinker, the professor finds the complete explanation of France in one trait which, as has already been indicated, was a symptom rather than a cause: his sensuality. In each chapter the same groups of words recur: "offensiveness," "unsavoriness," "the vulgar sensuality of the Rotisserie," "a score of the ugliest, the most offensive [scenes] I know in literature." These expressions are the leit-motifs of the book, and their emotional nature should be clear to any reader. They analyze nothing; they merely describe Professor Cerf's emotions on reading certain novels. An excellent example of the way in which France's sensuality is made to explain everything is Professor Cerf's discussion of France's attitude toward Christianity. France was a "sensualist": therefore he was resentful of a Church which was "the immemorial enemy of self-indulgence." The professor's explanations are too simple.

In the section on France the Artist he comes closer to criticism. He sees accurately enough that France was facile rather than profound; that his style has charmed us by its sensuousness rather than by classic simplicity; that his imagination was visual rather than structural—in short, that he was "the last of the Alexandrians." At this point criticism might have begun. But Professor Cerf is content to give these qualities names with bad moral connotations: effeminacy and, of course, sensuality.

It is true, as Professor Cerf says, that the younger French writers were already turning away from France before the War. He himself had made it necessary for them to discard him. With subtle flattery he was poisoning and burying the old world. Professor Cerf throws no light on these changes, nor the effects they had on France's art. He is alarmed at the atmosphere of lassitude and despair which surrounded this slow poisoning; and he has translated his alarm into moral indignation.

Madame Bölöni's Rambles With Anatole France is an account of the winter of 1910, when she acted as companion to France and nursed him through the depression which followed the death of Madame de Caillavet. There can be no doubt of her personal devotion and sympathy, but her hero-worship of "the Master" prevents her from drawing a living portrait. The France she pictures was not a man, subject to whims like others, but a slightly tedious god. She took his dictation in Paris and accompanied him on his last trip to Italy. She presents him as adoring Beauty with the conscious sentimentality of a young girl and talking like an extract from Baedeker. The effect, in spite of Madame Bölöni's emotional sincerity, is one of unreality. The book includes a number of interesting photographs of France in Italy.

LAWRENCE S. MORRIS.

Firstlings of the Flock

The Ruin, by Edward Sackville West. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

THE Gothic Novel, to which genre Mr. Sackville West assigns The Ruin, owed its eighteenth-century vogue to certain elements of horror, supernatural in origin. A problem for novelists in the succeeding century was to reproduce the emotional effect by means more agreeable to the growing sense for reality. The superstitions of science, particularly psychology, replaced those of religion, and earthly crime and punishment, instead of visitants from the other world, made the blood curdle. Mr. Sackville West has furnished an example of these gothic replacements. For the Castle of Otranto or Udolpho, he has established the Tudor mansion of Vair, inhabited by a decaying family whose wraith-like figures move through its halls like D'Annunzio's Virgins of the Rocks. As in Piano Quintette, music furnishes part of the emotional background—Sir James Torrent in his bare dust-embossed attic, amusing himself by playing the tinkling harmonies of Bellini and Donnizetti; and Nigel, his eldest son, prophesying the sinister rôle of his sister Ariadne by playing the last act of the Elektra of Richard Strauss. The vampire theme is carried by Marcus Fleming, who comes to suck the exhausted blood of the younger children, Denzil and Helen. Altogether, Mr. Sackville West has performed a masterpiece of legerdemain by filling the bottle of a modern novel of manners with the old and heady wine of gothic mystery and fear.

The Pacer, by Viola Paradise. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.

UNLIKE most first novels, Miss Paradise's book makes a stronger finish than the beginning leads one to expect. In the preliminary heats she moves a little heavily over the well worn course of a girl's poverty, ambition, and domestic success; but in the final round there is a great burst of speed. Or, to change the figure from track to stage, while Miss Paradise does honest and intelligent characterization, it is in her emotional work that she excels. The situation in which The Pacer closes is one of contrasted passion and affection, both genuinely felt and movingly rendered.

The Giant of Oldbourne, by John Owen. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.

THE GIANT is an extension of the brief record of a local celebrity, inscribed on a tombstone in a country churchyard, into a life. The experience thereof is imagined with the precise detail which made the author's Robert Gregory a notable piece of realism. It moves through the quiet landscape of English villages and counties a century ago, but the story of love and sacrifice is not the less finely tragic for being homely.

Spell Land, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.

SPELL LAND, another story of the English countryside of the same period, lacks the easy mastery which makes Mr. Owen's Giant, with its touch of abnormality, seem inevitably right. The analysis is over-insisted on, and the action is forced. Miss Kaye-Smith cannot entirely fail to interest us when she presents Sussex land and folk, but

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her earlier efforts, now republished, are bound to disappoint readers of Sussex Gorse and Joanna Godden.

Little Pitchers, by Isa Glenn. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

A TITLE which unhappily belies the serious art of the book. The story is one of those experiments in point of view of which Henry James was fond, and like What Maisie Knew is staged in the consciousness of a child. Michael Clendenning is at once the witness and the victim of a badly cast marriage play. A pathetic fragment of a family which he is always vaguely seeking to integrate, he is dragged from China to South America, to New England and back to Rio, the weight of an unintelligible world growing heavier with each transplanting. As in her former story, Heat, Mrs. Glenn deals richly in exotic background; but her chief triumph is her genuine and charming boy.

East Side, West Side, by Felix Riesenberg. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

IN a classification of American backgrounds in fiction the city is coming slowly to a place abreast of the farm and the small town. And in the United States there is only one metropolis that escapes the touch of the provincial. A metropolitan novel may be comprehensive like the city itself in the grasp of material, or it may be limited to a single phase of life. Manhattan Transfer is the most successful of the first type, and with it East Side, West Side will inevitably be compared. In the first place, Mr. Riesenberg uses the element of time as well as place; he has written a period novel of 1900-1929. But to do this he has encumbered himself with a hero, and his personal direction of the history of John Breen seems slightly naïve amid the sophistication of his background. Moreover, John Breen swims out into waters where his author can only cluck encouragingly from the bank. The Ghetto, the Bowery, the Catskill aqueduct, Mr. Riesenberg handles freely, but not the university or the drawing-room. He gallantly gives acknowledgment to Miss Margaret Rierdon of Henri Bendel, Inc., for "kind help in describing gowns worn by the more fashionable women characters"; but for the men! "A tall, smooth-shaven man in evening dress, faultlessly groomed, carrying an air of distinction, stood at the door."

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Contributors

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LAWRENCE S. MORRIS contributes sketches, stories and reviews to current magazines.

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